HISTORY OF BUDDHISM IN CEYLON

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THE ANURĀDHAPURA PERIOD

3rd Century BC—10th Century AC

REV. WALPOLA RAHULA

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TO

MY PARENTS

"...............Mātāpitaro
Pubbācariyā'ti vuccare."
(Aṅguttara)

and

TO

M. PAUL DEMIEVILLE

Member of the Institute of France,
Professor at the College of France,
Director of Buddhist Studies at the
School of Higher Studies (Sorbonne).

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PREFACE

The eminent position Śrī Laṅkā occupies among the Buddhist countries in the world enhances the need of a comprehensive history of Buddhism in Ceylon. But the whole period from the beginning to the present day is too wide a field for one volume.

Even the early period of Buddhism in Ceylon has not yet been critically examined or sufficiently studied. Dr. E. W. Adikaram's work on the "*State of Buddhism in Ceylon as Revealed by the Pāli Commentaries of the 5th Century A.D.*" is perhaps the only scholarly attempt so far in this field. But his is the attitude, as revealed in his book, of a devotee lamenting over the "degeneration" and "corruption" of the Faith. The attitude and approach to the subject here are somewhat different.

Dr. Adikaram's book covers the period up to the 5th century A.C. only, and he depends for his information on the Pāli Commentaries. The present work covers a wider period and draws material from almost all available sources.

The Introduction reviews in brief the sources made use of in this work. Since most of them have often been examined in detail by earlier scholars, I have touched only on a few points relevant to the present purpose. But two longer articles on the *Sahassavatthu* and the *Rasavāhinī* were necessary because these two works have not been seriously studied and examined by earlier scholars—particularly the yet unpublished *Sahassavatthu*.*

The first three chapters depict the background to the story: Asoka's India whence Buddhism came and pre-Buddhist Ceylon into which it was introduced. The next chapter relates how

* Since published (in Sinhalese characters), ed. A. P. Buddhadatta (1959).

Buddhism was established in Ceylon, and Chapter v discusses how it immediately became the state religion of Laṅkā. Chapters vi and vii take the reader quickly through the ups and downs of Buddhism in Ceylon during the period under review. In chapters viii and ix the monastery, the seat of Buddhist culture, is discussed in its various aspects : its structural features as well as its temporalities and administration. The monastic life, round which the history of Buddhism and Buddhist culture developed, is divided into three aspects : Chapter x examines its development under various social and economic influences through the centuries; Chapter xi reviews its routine activities, while Chapter xii discusses how its late ascetic ideal came into being. An attempt is made in Chapter xiii to discover the role of saintly monks, generally referred to as arahants, in ancient Ceylon. Chapter xiv depicts the life of the laity in its economic and social setting as a background to their religious life which is discussed in Chapter xv. Rites, ceremonies and festivals which form an important part of the popular religion occupy Chapter xvi. Very little is known and hardly anything has been written on education in ancient Ceylon. An attempt is made in the last chapter to discuss the system of education in old Ceylon, both religious and secular. A short article is inserted as an Appendix to clarify the term Mahāvihāra, which plays such an important part in the history of Buddhism in Ceylon.

I have discussed Mahāyānism in Ceylon only as a side issue whenever it came in my way ; but I have deliberately omitted to include a separate chapter on that subject, because there is already an excellent article on *Mahāyānism in Ceylon* written by Dr. S. Paranavitana in the C.J.Sc., Section G, Vol. ii.

No separate chapters are devoted here to literature and art. Much has already been written on these subjects ; for example, Dr. Malalasekera's *Pāli Literature of Ceylon*. But certain things that should be said about literary developments in the period are mentioned in brief in the discussion of sources, and also in the chapters on Monastic Life and Education. Similarly art is not treated separately, but references to it will be found in relevant places.

I have often given the references and examples as briefly as possible for fear of making this monograph too long. But at certain points I have related a few stories at some length with the specific purpose of creating in the reader's mind the atmosphere necessary for understanding and appreciating the life of a people who lived in a different civilization many centuries ago.

Often I have used in this work Sinhalese words like *Vesak* (Pāli *Vesākha*), *vas* (P. *vassa*), *pōya* (P. *uposatha*), *aṭa-sil* (P. *aṭṭhaṅga-sīla*), *Bō* (P. *Bodhi*-) tree, *pirit* (P. *paritta*), *dāgäba* (P. *cetiya*), for they have now come to stay as internationally known specific Buddhist terms. H. Kern himself used the word *dagob* for *cetiya* and *stūpa* (*Manual of Indian Buddhism*, pp. 91-92). J. Legge, who translated Fa Hien's Travels, uses the simple Sinhalese word *Mugalan* instead of the high-sounding Mahā-Maudgalyāyana and says : "Mugalan, the Sinhalese name of this disciple, is more pronounceable" (p. 44, n. 4). So are most of the Sinhalese Buddhist terms "more pronounceable" than Pāli or Sanskrit terms.

Except for five or six PTS editions, all the Pāli texts used in this work are Sinhalese editions.

It is difficult adequately to express my sense of gratitude to my teacher Dr. G. P. Malalasekera, Professor of Pāli in the University of Ceylon,* for all the help he has given me. No point in this monograph has escaped his careful attention. It has been both a pleasant and profitable discipline to work with an *ācārya* of Dr. Malalasekera's academic experience and literary maturity.

I owe a debt of gratitude to three of my venerable friends: to the late Tripiṭakācārya Häḍipannala Paññāloka Thera, Vice-Principal of the Vidyālaṅkāra Pirivena, for helping me with valuable discussions on several Vinaya problems; to Yakkaḍuvē Siri Paññārāma Thera, Vice-Principal and Director of the Vidyālaṅkāra Pirivena,*for putting at my disposal all his wide knowledge of Pāli language and literature—particularly the Commentarial literature; to Tripiṭakācārya Koṭahēnē Paññākitti Thera, a Vice-Principal of the same Pirivena,* for giving me the opportunity to discuss with him some problems of diverse nature.

* Please see foot-note on next page.

Dr. E. F. C. Ludowyk, Professor of English in the University of Ceylon,* who took a personal interest in my work from the beginning, has not only helped me with my English, but also offered me many useful suggestions. I thank him for all the help he has given me. I wish to express my thanks to Dr. H. C. Ray,* Professor of History, for several discussions on this work and offering me some valuable suggestions.

I am grateful to Mr.C. W. Nicholas* for his kindness in preparing the Map of Ancient Ceylon, and thank the Archaeological Commissioner for giving me permission to use the Map of Anurādhapura prepared by the Department of Archaeological Survey of Ceylon.

I express my gratitude to M. Jean Bertrand Bocandé of Paris for kindly preparing the Index. Finally, my thanks are due to Mr. Julius de Lanerolle,* Editor-in-chief of the Sinhalese Etymological Dictionary, for his kind help and advice in many ways, and to Messrs M. D. Gunasena & Co., Ltd. for bringing out this edition.

W. RAHULA.

Paris,
August, 1955.

The three last named are now no more. The status and designations are or were considerably different at the time of the second edition.

ABBREVIATIONS

A. . . . . . . Aṅguttara-nikāya.

AA. . . . . . . Aṅguttara - nikāyaṭṭhakathā (Manorathapūraṇī), Commentary on the Aṅguttara-nikāya.

A.C. . . . . . After Christ.

B.C. . . . . . Before Christ.

B.E. . . . . . Buddhist Era.

CBhA. . . . . . Catubhāṇavāraṭṭhakathā (Sāratthasamuccaya), Commentary on the Catubhāṇavāra

CJSc. . . . . . Ceylon Journal of Science.

Clv. . . . . . Cūlavaṃsa.

Clvg. . . . . . Cullavagga (of the Vinaya).

D. . . . . . . Dīgha-nikāya.

DA. . . . . . Dīgha-nikāyaṭṭhakathā (Sumaṅgalavilāsinī), Commentary on the Dīgha-nikāya.

Dāṭhā . . . . . Dāṭhāvaṃsa.

Dhātu. . . . . . Dhātuvaṃsa.

DhAG. . . . . . Dhampiyā-Aṭuvā-Gāṭapadaya.

Dhp. . . . . . Dhammapada.

DhpA. . . . . . Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā, Commentary on the Dhammapada.

DhSA. . . . . . Dhammasaṅgaṇi-Aṭṭhakathā, Commentary on the Dhammasaṅgaṇi.

DPPN. . . . . . Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names by G.P.Malalasekera.

Dpv. . . . . . Dīpavaṃsa.

EHBC. . . . . . Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon by E. W. Adikaram.

ERE. . . . . . Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.

EZ. . . . . . Epigraphia Zeylanica.

Fa Hien . . . . A Record of Buddhist Kingdoms: An Account of the Chinese Monk Fa Hien of his Travels in India and Ceylon translated by J. Legge.

HBT. . . . . . History of Buddhist Thought by E.J. Thomas.

HIL. . . . . History of Indian Literature by M. Winternitz.

Hiuen Tsiang . . Buddhist Records of the Western World translated from the Chinese of Hiuen Tsiang by Samuel Beal.

JA. . . . . Jātakaṭṭhakathā, Commentary on the Jātakas.

JAG. . . . . Jātaka-Aṭuvā-Gāṭapadaya.

JRAS.(CB). . . Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon Branch).

M. . . . . Majjhima-nikāya.

MA. . . . . Majjhima-nikāyaṭṭhakathā (Papañcasūdanī), Commentary on the Majjhima-nikāya.

Manu. . . . . Manusmṛti.

MBv. . . . . Mahābodhivaṃsa.

Mhv. . . . . Mahāvaṃsa.

Mhvg. . . . . Mahāvagga.

MIB. . . . . Manual of Indian Buddhism by H. Kern.

Miln. . . . . Milinda-pañha.

MṬ. . . . . Mahāvaṃsa-Ṭīkā, Vaṃsatthappakāsinī.

Nks. . . . . Nikāyasaṅgrahaya.

Pācit. . . . . Pācittiya-Pāli (of the Vinaya).

PañcA. . . . . Pañcappakaraṇaṭṭhakathā.

Pārāj. . . . . Pārājika-Pāli (of the Vinaya).

Pjv. . . . . Pūjāvaliya.

PLC. . . . . Pāli Literature of Ceylon by G.P. Malalasekera (1928).

Pmk. . . . . Pātimokkha.

PmkA. . . . . Kaṅkhāvitaraṇī, Commentary of the Mātikā (Pātimokkha).

Prmj. . . . . Paramatthajotikā.

PTS. . . . . Pāli Text Society.

RE. . . . . Rock Edicts of Asoka.

Rjv. . . . . Rājāvaliya.

Rsv. . . . . Rasavāhinī.

RsvṬ. . . . . Rasavāhinī-Ṭīkā.

S. . . . . Saṃyutta-nikāya.

SA. . . . . Saṃyutta-nikāyaṭṭhakathā (Sāratthappakāsinī), Commentary on the Saṃyutta-nikāya.

Sat.Br. . . . . Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.

SBE. . . . . Sacred Books of the East.

SHB. . . . . Simon Hewavitarne Bequest Series (Colombo).

Shv. . . . . Sahassavatthu.

Sn. . . . . Suttanipāta.

SnA. . . . . Suttanipātaṭṭhakathā (Paramatthajotikā), Commentary on the Suttanipāta.

Thera . . . . Theragāthā.

Therī. . . . . . Therīgāthā.

UCR. . . . . . University of Ceylon Review.

VbhA. . . . . . Vibhaṅgaṭṭhakathā (Sammohavinodanī), Commentary on the Vibhaṅga.

Vsm. . . . . . Visuddhimagga.

INTRODUCTION : SOURCES

The main sources on which this work is based may (chronologically) be divided into seven groups:

I. Pāli Scriptures
II. Asokan Edicts
III. Ceylon Inscriptions
IV. Pāli Chronicles
V. Pāli Commentaries
VI. Folk-tales and
VII. Miscellaneous works in Pāli and Sinhalese.

I. PĀLI SCRIPTURES

In discussing the various aspects of Buddhist life, particularly that of the Saṅgha, as revealed by the Pāli commentaries and other sources, the aid of the scriptures, both the *Dhamma* and the *Vinaya*, is sought wherever necessary to trace their historical development. Although there is evidence to prove the growth of the Pāli Scriptures during the early centuries of Buddhism in India and Ceylon, there is no reason to doubt that their growth was arrested and the text was finally fixed in the 5th century A.C., when the Sinhalese Commentaries on the Tripiṭaka were translated into Pāli by Buddhagosa.

II. ASOKAN EDICTS

The Asokan Edicts are an acknowledged source of reliable information for the reconstruction of social and religious life in India in the 3rd century B.C., and they are extensively used here in depicting the Indian background.

III. CEYLON INSCRIPTIONS

Written records in the Island are found only after the introduction of Buddhism in the 3rd century B.C.* The earliest of them, in the form of the lithic records, carved below the drip-ledges on the brows of caves utilized as residences for monks, go back to about the 3rd or 2nd century B.C.

Those belonging to the pre-Christian Era are very short donative inscriptions, like formulas, generally stating that "so-and-so's cave was given to the saṅgha".

Inscriptions carved on rocks recording grants of tanks, canals, fields, water taxes and other means of income for the maintenance of monks and monasteries, are found after the first century A.C. The establishment, as well as repairs, of monasteries is often mentioned in these records.

Deposits of paddy and other grains on interest as a form of endowment for various religious purposes begin to appear from the fourth century A.C. It is only after the fifth century that we come across money-deposits as religious endowments.

After the ninth century we get long and valuable inscriptions dealing with such matters as the administration of monasteries and local government, laws and customs.

Inscriptions constitute a most reliable source of history, when they speak of contemporary men and affairs as they usually do. But when they speak of past events, their importance is no greater than that of the chronicles. Rhetorical verbosity common in inscriptions after the twelfth century is seldom found in inscriptions before the tenth century.

Even the very short inscriptions of the early centuries contain valuable information, often casually in a word or a phrase, while

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* **The chronology of the 1st edn. is retained throughout.**

the longer inscriptions of the later centuries directly offer a wealth of historical material. Ancient inscriptions of Ceylon include documents, both government and private.[1]

IV. THE PALI CHRONICLES

The *Dīpavaṃsa* is the oldest extant Pāli chronicle of Ceylon. It is now agreed that it assumed its present form about the fourth century A.C. Buddhaghosa's Commentaries, which were written early in the fifth century A.C., refer to it by its name and quote verses from it.[2]

The story of the *Dīpavaṃsa* begins with the Buddha's life in brief and his visits to Ceylon, and ends with the reign of Mahāsena in the fourth century A.C.

The rugged nature of its language and style, its grammatical peculiarities, its many repetitions and the absence of any plan or scheme in its narrative convince the reader that the *Dīpavaṃsa* is not the continuous work of one individual, but a heterogeneous collection of material like ballads of some unskilled versifiers who lived at different periods in different parts of the Island.

Geiger thought that it was on the *Dīpavaṃsa* that Buddhaghosa based his historical introduction to the *Samantapāsādikā.*[3] But it may be more correct to say that both the Pali Commentaries and the *Dīpavaṃsa* drew their material from a common source. Certain verses quoted in the *Samantapāsādikā* as from the *porāṇas* and also from some other unspecified source are found in the Dpv. with only slight modifications.[4] It can be conjectured that the ancient Sinhalese *Aṭṭhakathā* formed the sources of the Dpv.

1. All the lithic records of Ceylon are not yet available. In this work only the inscriptions published in Vols. I–IV *Epigraphia Zeylanica* are used.

2. See Smp. (SHB), pp. 43, 44; PañcA. I, p. 81.

3. Geiger:Mhv. tr. introd. p. xi.

4. Cf. Dpv. xii, 35-39 with the verses in Smp. (SHB), p. 41 and Dpv. iv, 50-51, with the verses in Smp. (SHB), pp. 19-20.

The *Mahāvaṃsa*.[1]—The first part of the *Mahāvaṃsa* (Chs. i-xxxvii, 50)is ascribed to a thera called Mahānāma who lived at the Dīghasandasenāpati-Pariveṇa[2] in Anurādhapura about the fifth century A.C. The second part (Chs. xxxvii, 51 - LXXIX) was written by Dhammakitti Thera in the 13th century A.C., probably at Poḷonnaruva. In the present work only the portion from the beginning to Ch. LII is chiefly and extensively used, although references to the other parts of the chronicle are frequently made.

The *Mahāvaṃsa* is based on several sources. At the very outset (Mhv. i,2) Mahānāma says that there was a history on the same subject written by the ancients (*porāṇehi*) which was full of faults such as repetitions and unnecessary details. Whether this was our Dpv. or some other work, there should be no reasonable doubt that the Dpv. served as a working basis for the author of the Mhv. In addition, he made use of whatever was handed down by tradition (*sutito ca upāgataṃ*).

There were certain records kept in royal families, and also in the houses of the rich, known as *puñña-potthaka* "merit-books" in which various important meritorious deeds were written down.[3]

1. Geiger and many others generally regard as the *Mahāvaṃsa* only the portion from Ch. i to Ch. xxxvii, 50 of the *Great Chronicle*. The rest of the work they choose to call the *Cūlavaṃsa*, as edited and translated by Geiger in two volum But there does not seem to be any sound reason to make this distinction. Geiger (*Cūlavaṃsa* I, Intro. p. 1) refers to Mhv. xcix, 76 as justification for naming Parts II and III as *Cūlavaṃsa*. But this evidence is too flimsy. It refers to the kings of "the great dynasty" (*mahāvaṃsa*) and "the lesser dynasty" (*cūlavaṃsa*), in the sense of "lineage" and not chronicle. Verse 78 of the same chapter refers to the *Great Chronicle* as *Mahāvaṃsaṃ ganthaṃ* (Mahāvaṃsa book).

The authors of the *Great Chronicle* make no such division as *Mahāvaṃsa* and *Cūlavaṃsa* : they call the whole chronicle *Mahāvaṃsa* from the beginning to the end, as evident from the formula-like sentence at the conclusion of each chapter throughout the work. It is only later writers like the authors of the *Nikāyasaṅgrahaya* and *Rājāvaliya* who began to make this uncalled for distinction. But it is strange that even the author of the *Nikāyasaṅgrahaya* (p. 13) quotes verse 75 of Ch. xxxviii and says it is from the *Mahāvaṃsa*, which is in fact from the *Cūlavaṃsa* if Geiger's division is adopted. Whether the author of the Nks. included Ch. xxxviii in the Mhv. we do not know.

In this work the whole of the *Great Chronicle* is referred to as the *Mahāvaṃsa* from Ch. i – Ch. ci, in accordance with the practice of its authors. The Colombo edition, too, knows the whole work as the *Mahāvaṃsa*.

2. MT., p. 687.

3. See below p.254.

Most probably the list of vihāras, cetiyas, tanks, canals, etc., and various other pious activities of kings and ministers were based on these records.[1]

It is said that Udaya I *alias* Dappula II (792-797 A.C.) had judgments written down in books and kept in safety at the royal palace.[2] There were also records of government activities chronicled on the orders of certain kings.[3] Further there were earlier historical writings like the *Dāṭhādhātuvaṃsa,*[4] the *Kesadhātuvaṃsa,*[5] and many such other works.[6]

Although the Mhv. is embellished with poetic diction and imagery, the authors seem to have followed the available sources very faithfully. Minute details found in these sources were carefully included in their work.[7] Even the fact that a certain thing was not found in the sources is also particularly mentioned.[8]

The impartiality of the author of the first part of the Mhv. is remarkable. He refers to foreign Tamil rulers as just and good if they were really so, even if he disliked them as foreigners. He says Sena and Guttika, the two Tamil usurpers, ruled righteously (*dhammena*).[9] Eḷāra, the Chola prince who captured the Sinhalese throne by force of arms, could not have been popular. But Mahānāma admits that he was just and impartial in administration, and gives a number of examples in illustration.[10]

Reluctance is expressed in some quarters to regard the Mhv. as history. If the Mhv. is not a history of Ceylon, it is decidedly the history of Buddhism in Ceylon, and the history of Buddhism

1. *E.g.* see Mhv. xxxii, 26 ff ; xxxviii, 45 ff.; LX, 48 ff.; LXXIX. 62 ff.
2. Mhv. XLIX, 20.
3. *Ibid.* LIX, 7 ff.
4. *Ibid.* xxxvii, 93.
5. *Ibid.* xxxix, 49,56.
6. See below pp. xxiv, xxvii.
7. *E.g.* see Mhv. xiv, 17-21, 24, 30; xxxviii, 59 ; XLIV, 66,67.
8. Mhv. xix, 44—*gaṇanāya paricchedo porāṇehi na bhāsito* "no definite number is given by the ancients."
9. *Ibid.* xxi, 11.
10. *Ibid.* xxi, 14 ff.

in Ceylon covers the major part of the Island's history. Both the *Dīpavaṃsa* and the *Mahāvaṃsa* are histories of Buddhism. In them secular history is subservient to religious history.[1] Kern[2] says that these chronicles deserve special notice on account of their being so highly important for the ecclesiastical history of Ceylon. Geiger[3] thinks that these two Ceylon chronicles should claim our attention as sources of history.[4]

The *Mahāvaṃsa-Ṭīkā*.—Although the Commentary on the Mhv. is popularly known as the *Mahāvaṃsa-Ṭīkā*, nowhere does its author call his work by that name. His own name for it is the *Vaṃsatthappakāsinī* and the descriptive title *Padya-* (or *Pajja-*) *padoruvaṃsa-vaṇṇanā*. The author is traditionally believed to be a thera known as Mahānāma (not the author of Mhv.). Malalasekera, who edited this work for the Pāli Text Society, assigns the MṬ to about the 8th or 9th century A.C.[5] The MṬ adds to our knowledge a not inconsiderable amount of new information borrowed from its sources like the old Sinhalese *Aṭṭhakathā*, tradition (*porāṇā*), *Uttaravihāra-Aṭṭhakathā*, *Vinayaṭṭhakathā*, *Dīpavaṃsaṭṭhakathā*, *Sīmākathā*, *Cetiyavaṃsaṭṭthakathā*, *Mahābodhivaṃsaṭṭhakathā*, *Sahassavatthu - Aṭṭhakathā*, *Gaṇṭhipadavaṇṇanā*. The last mentioned is obviously a glossary to the Mhv. explaining difficult words and phrases.[6]

V. PALI COMMENTARIES

The Pāli Commentaries of Buddhaghosa written at the Mahāvihāra at Anurādhapura in the 5th century form a reliable and fertile source of material for the reconstruction of the history of Buddhism in Ceylon from the 3rd century B.C. to the 5th century A.C. Buddhaghosa's work was that of an editor-translator, but he seems to have performed his task so efficiently and with such

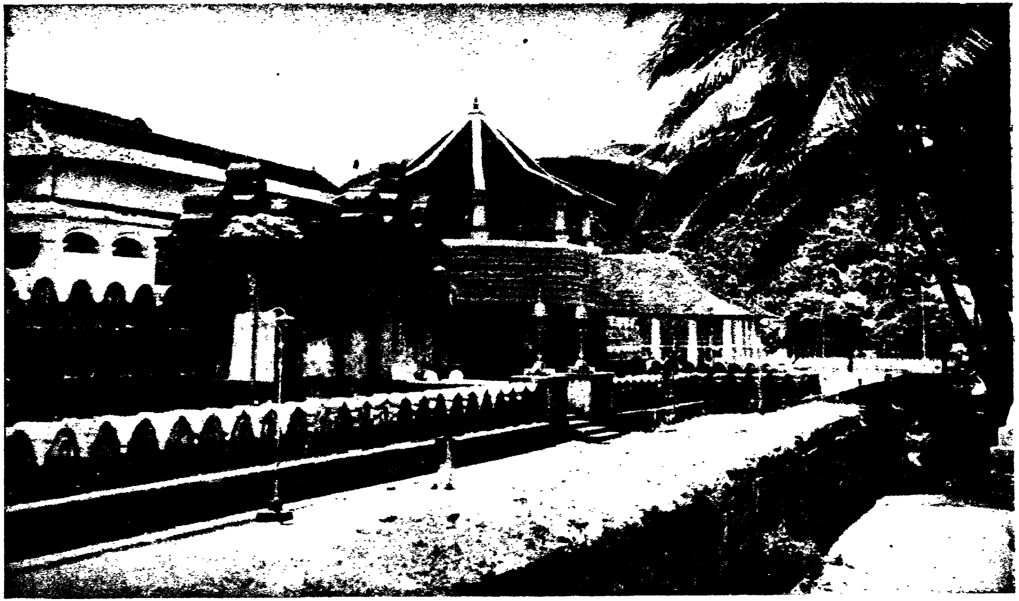
1. See below p. 161 ff.
2. MIB. p 9.
3. Geiger : Mhv. tr. p. ix.
4. For details see Geiger's *Dīpavaṃsa* and *Mahāvaṃsa* and B.C. Law: *On the Chronicles of Ceylon*.
5. MṬ. intro. p. cix.
6. For a comprehensive study, see Malalasekera's admirable introduction to the MṬ.

I



Buddhaghosa submits the Visuddhimagga to the Saṅgha
at the Mahāvihāra, Anurādhapura
(From a painting at the Kälaṇi Vihāra)

II



Ceylon Archaeological Survey

The approach to the DAḶADĀ-MĀLIGĀVA (Palace of the Tooth Relic), Kandy.

(*Here a Tooth of the Buddha, brought to Ceylon in the 4th century A.C., is preserved.*) (p. xxv)

discretion and authority that now he is regarded more or less as "the author of the Commentaries". Buddhaghosa himself says that the Commentaries to the *Tipiṭaka* were brought to the Island of the Sinhalese by Mahinda and that they were written down originally in Sinhalese for the benefit of the people of the Island.[1]

The *Mūla-* or *Mahā-Aṭṭakathā*, the *Mahā-Paccarī* and the *Kurundī* were the three principal Sinhalese exegetical works in which the Commentaries on almost all the important texts of the *Tipiṭaka* were embodied. In addition to them there were several other Commentarial works of less importance, mainly in Sinhalese. These Commentaries on the *Tipiṭaka* can be considered as the earliest literary works. None of them are extant today. Short extracts from these Sinhalese originals can still be found in the Dhampiyā-Aṭuvā-Gäṭapadaya.[2]

The Sinhalese commentaries did not remain static in the same form; they began in the 3rd century B.C., but kept on growing and accumulating new material as they passed through the centuries. The signs of their growth, at least up to the 2nd century A.C., can be detected, for one of the commentaries[3] refers to Vasabha who ruled from 127-171 A.C. The newly added material was, naturally enough, drawn from local incidents and social and religious life of the people of the Island. The purpose of adding this new local material was not to teach history or local conditions, though we make use of them for that purpose today, but to illustrate or elucidate doctrinal and ethical points in a striking and homely manner.

Buddhaghosa in his introduction to the commentaries says that he only translated these Sinhalese commentaries into Pāli and in so doing he left out unnecessary details and repetitions as well as irrelevant matter, but without prejudice to the traditions of the Mahāvihāra. Some of the material thus left out, though not useful to his purpose, would, even at the risk of its being irrelevant, have been of immense value to us today if it had been

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1. See Buddhaghosa's introductory verses to DA., MA., AA., or SA.
2. DhAG. pp. 79, 80, 105, 136, 148, 149.
3. Smp. (SHB), p. 337.

preserved.[1] It was left out perhaps because it was too well known to the people at the time.

There is reason to believe that there was a common stock of popular stories in ancient Ceylon from which the commentators as well as others borrowed abundantly whenever they were in need of a story to illustrate a point, to clinch an argument, or to gratify the religious sentiments of the devout.[2] That those stories were well known both to preachers and to their audiences is evident from the fact that Buddhaghosa in many places only refers to them but does not give them in full. For instance, in the Vsm., he says : *Telakandarika-vatthu cettha kathetabbaṃ*[3] "Here the story of Telakandarika also should be related." *Cīvaragumba vāsika - ambakhādaka - Mahā - Tissatheravatthupi cettha kathetabbaṃ*[4] "Here the story of Mahā-Tissa Thera, who eats mango, living in Cīvaragumba, also should be related." *Ādito paṭṭhāya laddhaṃ laddhaṃ bhikkhaṃ tatra tatra dārakānaṃ datvā ante khīrayāguṃ labhitvā gatabhikkhu-avatthucettha kathetabbaṃ*[5] "Here should also be related the story of the bhikkhu who went away getting milk-gruel at last, after he had given to children whatever food he got from the beginning."[6]

These stories are not given, and it is not easy to trace them now. But at the time the commentaries were written they were evidently known to the people in the same way as common fables like that of the fox and the grapes are known to us today.[7]

1. MT. p. 193 says that the Sinhalese commentary on the *Cūlasīhanāda-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya* contains certain information about Janasāna and the mother of Asoka (Dhammāsoka). But this information is not found today in Buddhaghosa's Pāli Commentary to the *Cūlasīhanāda-sutta* of M., which shows clearly that Buddhaghosa did not translate the original Sinhalese Commentaries fully. But sometimes very striking minute details like the story about King Kuṭakaṇṇa's horse, Guḷavaṇṇa, are preserved. MA. p. 653.

2. Compare and contrast the story of Dārubhaṇḍaka-Mahātissa in AA. p. 277 ff. with *Tissāya vatthu* and *Nakulassa vatthu* in Rsv. II, p. 33 ff. and 143 ff.

3. Vsm. p. 21.

4. *Ibid.* p 33.

5. *Ibid.* p. 23. For more examples see Vsm. pp. 94, 516 ; AA. p. 274.

6. Cf. also names of the stories in the Shv. See below p. xxxii.

7. For a detailed study of the sources, nature and contents of the Pāli commentaries read Adikaram ; *EHBC*. Part I.

VI. FOLK TALES

The *Sahassavatthu-Aṭṭhakathā* or *Sahassavatthuppakaraṇa*.[1] There are two photostat copies and one handwritten copy at the Ceylon University Library.[2]

(1) *Sahassavatthuppakaraṇa*.—Photostat copy of Or 6601 (49), British Museum. Palm leaf. Sinhalese script. 40 photostat plates. 154 palm leaf pages. The length of a page covered by letters is 16 ins. There are 9 lines to a page. There is an extra page which contains the following in English :

> "This *Sahassavatthuppakaraṇa*, is presented to H. Neville Esquire, Government Agent, Anuradhapura, by S. Paññananda Sthawira, Tibhummikārāma, Gintota, Galle, 1st August, 1894."

(2) *Sahassavatthuppakaraṇa*.—Photostat copy of Or 4674, British Museum. Palm leaf. Sinhalese script. 50 photostat plates. 298 palm leaf pages. The length of a page covered by letters on the average is 10 ins. There are 7 or 8 lines to a page.

(3) *Sahassavatthu-Aṭṭhakathā*.—A hand-written copy of MS. in the Bernard Free Library, Rangoon, Burma. Burmese script.

The author of the work is not known. In his introduction, after venerating the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha, the author salutes the *Sīhaḷācariyas* (Teachers of Ceylon) and says that he borrows material for his work from *Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathā* (Sinhalese works) and the traditions of the teachers.[3]

The date of the work is doubtful. But the very name *Sahassavatthu-Aṭṭhakathā* and the references to it in the MT. suggest that it belongs to a period earlier than the 9th century A.C. The word *aṭṭhakathā* had, during the early Anurādhapura period, a wider connotation than it has at present. Today it means only

1. This article, except for a few alterations made in the light of further research, appeared in the UCR. Vol. II, pp. 86-91.

2. There are two MSS. at the Colombo Museum bearing Nos. 1409 and 1410 of W. A. de Silva's Catalogue. But these Mss. were not available to students at the time this was written. So, too, the published work. (See Note p. xi.)

3. *Sahassavatthuṃ bhāsissaṃ, Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathānayaṃ gaṇhitvā cariyavādañ ca.*

the Pāli Commentaries on the *Tipiṭaka*. But during the Anurādhapura period the term was applied to all kinds of literary work other than the *Tipiṭaka*. Hence even a book of folk tales like the *Sahassavatthu* was called *Aṭṭhakathā*. At that time there were only two forms of literature: *Pāli*, signifying the Texts of the *Tipiṭaka*, and *Aṭṭhakathā*, embracing all the other literary work including the commentaries on the *Tipiṭaka* and such works as *Mahābodhivaṃsaṭṭhakathā* (a work on the History of the Great Bodhi Tree), *Cetiyavaṃsaṭṭhakathā* (a work on the History of the Cetiyas), *Mahācetiyavaṃsaṭṭhakathā* (a work on the History of the Great Cetiya), *Dīpavaṃsaṭṭhakathā* (a work on the History of the Great Island),*Mahāvaṃsaṭṭhakathā* (a work on the History of the Great Dynasty). These were all written in Sinhalese. The word *Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathā* was used to denote Sinhalese works in general. There was no form of literature known as *Ṭīkā* at that time. The term *Ṭīkā* came into vogue only during the Poḷonnaruva period about the 10th or 11th century A.C. under the Sanskrit influence. So far as we know Ānanda's *Mūlaṭīkā* was the first *Ṭīkā*. It was written about the 10th or 11th century A.C. Ānanda was the teacher of Buddhappiya, the author of the Pāli grammar, *Rūpasiddhi*. The author of the *Moggallāyana*, which was written about the middle of the 12th century A.C., knew Buddhappiya's *Rūpasiddhi*. Therefore we cannot be far wrong if we place Ānanda somewhere in the 10th or 11th century. The beginning of the *Ṭīkā* literature can thus roughly be assigned to a period between the 10th and 11th century. Prior to this period all works other than the *Tipiṭaka* seem to have been known under the generic term *Aṭṭhakathā*. On this account the name *Sahassavatthu-Aṭṭhakathā* tempts one to assign it to a period at least earlier than the 9th century A.C.

Both the *Mahāvaṃsa* and *Mahāvaṃsa-Aṭṭhakathā* are referred to in this work, and a reference is also made to and opinion expressed by *Uttaravihāravāsins*. The reference to *Mahāvaṃsa* shows that the work is later than the 5th century A.C. The mention of *Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathā* (in the introduction) and the *Mahāvaṃsaṭṭhakathā* (in the body of the work) shows that the *Sahassavatthu* belongs to an early period, for the reference to *Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathā* is not to be found in works, either in Pāli or in

Sinhalese, written later than about the 10th century. That the *Mahāvaṃsa-Aṭṭhakathā* was read by students at the time the *Sahassavatthu* was written is evident from the fact that the author of the work refers his readers to the *Mahāvaṃsaṭṭhakathā* for further details.[1]

The *Mahāvaṃsa-Ṭīkā*, which belongs approximately to about the 9th century A.C. as we have seen earlier, has three references[2] to the *Sahassavatthaṭṭhakathā*. The first two (one about Suranimmala and the other about Goṭhayimbara) are found in the MSS. But the third (about Prince Sāli) is not to be found. In fact the story of Sāli is altogether omitted in these MSS. They contain only one sentence about Prince Sāli : *Sālirājakumāravatthuṃ Mahāvaṃse vuttanayena, veditabbaṃ. Sālirājakumāravatthuṃ dutiyaṃ.* This is all that is found about Prince Sāli. Whether the person who copied the original book omitted the story, referring the reader to the Mhv. in order to relieve himself of the labour of copying a long story, or whether these MSS. represent an abridged form of the original *Sahassavatthu* cannot be decided, unless and until some more MSS. are consulted. But in the *Rasavāhinī*, which is generally believed to be a work based on the Shv., is found[3] the reference to Sāli as in the given *Mahāvaṃsa- Ṭīkā*.

Vedeha, the author of the Rsv., says in his introduction that his book is based on a Pāli work written by a thera named Raṭṭhapāla who resided in Guttavaṅka-Pariveṇa at the Mahāvihāra in Anurādhapura. Can the Shv. be the work here referred to ?

The late Hugh Nevill, in the catalogue of his manuscript collections now in the British Museum (No. 115), has suggested that the *Sahassavatthuppakaraṇa* formed the basis for the Pāli *Rasavāhinī* and that it was a work of the Dhammaruci Sect. But Malalasekera sees no reason to justify the assigning of it to the Abhayagiri.[4]

1. *Ayaṃ pana saṅkhepo. Vitthāro pana Mahāvaṃsaṭṭhakathāyaṃ vutto. Atthikehi tato gahetabbo.* (*Dhammāsoka-mahārājassa vatthu.*)
2. MṬ. pp. 451, 452, 607.
3. Rsv. II, p. 116.
4. PLC. pp. 128-129.

A sentence in the story of Goṭha-imbara which reads *Uttara-vihāravāsino pana evaṃ vadanti*[1] "thus the residents of the Uttaravihāra say", definitely proves that the Shv. was not a work of the monks of the Uttaravihāra, i.e., of the monks of the Dhammaruci Sect.

The introduction to the Rsv.[2] says further that Raṭṭhapāla's work was a translation into Pāli of stories told by Arahants of old, and recorded in Sinhalese by the ancients. The introduction to the Shv. says that the author followed the scheme of the Sinhalese works (*Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathā-nayaṃ*). A perusal of the Shv. shows quite clearly that the work is a literal and often crude translation into Pāli of a Sinhalese original. The language of the Shv. is often ungrammatical, unpolished and abrupt, and makes no pretensions to any literary elegance. It abounds in direct translations of Sinhalese idioms and usages which may be called "Siṃhala-Pāli", e.g.:

Kālasigālam pimbaro aggahesi (*Kālasigālassa vatthu*) ;
Tava sahāyakaṃ suvapotakaṃ māritacoroti āha (*Byag-ghassa vatthu*);
Etassa manussassa geha-dinna manusso (*Coragehe vasita-manussassa vatthu*);
Mayhaṃ āhāraṃ khāditvā āgama-kālaṃ maṃ ito muñcanu-pāyaṃ karohīti (*Coragehe vasita-manussassa vatthu*) ;
Tava kathana-paccekabuddho nāma kīdisoti (*Dhammāsoka-mahārājassa vatthu*);
Sīhaḷadīpe uttara-pacchiyaṃ (*Dantakuṭumbikassa vatthu*);
Taṃ pūjaṃ karaṇasamaye (*Kañcanadeviyā vatthu*).

Such sentences abundantly scattered throughout the work cannot be fully understood and appreciated without a sufficient knowledge of Sinhalese.

Sometimes such usages as *podaṃ kiḷituṃ* "to fight" or "to wrestle" (*Goṭha-imbara-vatthu*) are met with. But they are not found elsewhere in Pāli. Perhaps the word *poda* may be a Pālicized Sinhalese word for "fight", like *pimbaro* (Sinh. pim̆burā) for "python" or "boa" (the usual Pāli word for which is

1. This sentence occurs in the Rsv., too.
2. Rsv. I, Intro. vv. 5—7.

ajagara), or like *pacchiyaṃ* (Sinh. *pasa*) for "direction" or "side" or "district" or "province" (usual Pāli for which is *passa*).

Ungrammatical sentences like :

Oloketvā attano gate (*Coraghātakassa vatthu*);
Atha nāvā sattadivasaṃ gatakāle samuddamajjhe bhijji (*Dantakuṭumbikassa vatthu*);
Rañño putto vijāyi (*Coragehe vasita-manussassa vatthu*)

are also found. Side by side with these ungrammatical and crude forms we find good idiomatic usage such as:

Yathā dhotena pattena (*Tissadahara-sāmaṇerassa vatthu*);
Dukkhāpetvā[1] (*Coraghātaka-vatthu*).

There are sentences which exhibit also an influence of the *Jātakaṭṭhakathā*.

The *Rasavāhinī* introduction adds that the stories told in Sinhalese by the Arahants of old had their origin in various places (*tattha tatthūpapannāni vatthūni*). Several examples in the Shv. show that the stories were evidently based on oral reports from various places. The relation of a story or an incident sometime ends with *iti vadanti* "so they say". For example :

Tāvatiṃsabhavane nibbattiṃsūti vadanti (*Kākassa vatthu*);
Catuhi māsehi gatoti vadanti (*Cūlanāgattherassa vatthu*);
Gahetvā agamaṃsūti vadanti (*Tambasumanatherassa vatthu*);
Aladdhaṭṭhānaṃ nāma natthīti vadanti (*Pūvapabbatavāsī-Tissatherassa vatthu*).

The author of the *Rasavāhinī* admits that his work is simply a revision of Raṭṭhapāla's Pāli translation which abounded in faults such as repetition.[2]

Anyone who goes through the Shv. feels that it needs revision very badly, not only in language but also in its arrangement. There is neither system nor method in the arrangement of the Shv.

Usually there are 10 stories to a *vagga* (chapter). But one *vagga* has 5 stories, another 9, while a third has 11. Very often

1. Cf. *Sukhāpetvā* in the *Janavasabha-sutta*, D. II, p. 124.
2. *Punaruttādi-dosehi tamāsi sabbam ākulaṃ anākulaṃ karissāmi*— Rsv. I, Intro. v. 7.

the name of a story at the beginning is different from that given at the end. The titles of stories are usually descriptive and long and are meant to indicate the nature of the contents, e.g., *Cūlagallaraṭṭhe āsanasālaṃ jaggantassa upāsakassa vatthu; Mahāgāme Tissamahāvihāre dhammasuta-nesādassa vatthu.* It is in this descriptive fashion that stories among the Sinhalese villagers are named even today.[1]

The literary style of the fourth *vagga* is entirely different from the rest. A story begins with a *gāthā* which gives the gist of the story in brief. At the end, just after the two words *tena vuttaṃ*, the same *gāthā* is repeated. Sometimes, after the *gāthā* at the beginning, the story opens with *taṃ yathā 'nusuyyate*. The fourth *vagga* seems to have had some Sanskrit influence.

There is no system in the arrangement of the stories either. They are all mixed. The stories from Jambudīpa are scattered among those of Laṅkā. The story of Kākavaṇṇa-Tissa (9th of the *vagga* iv) is really the story of three people, namely, Kākavaṇṇa-Tissa, Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī and Velusumana. But at the end of the *vagga*, without relating it, the story of Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī is named as the tenth one. It simply says : *Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī-Abhaya-mahārañño vatthu Mahāvaṃse vitthāritameva. Taṃ tato gahetabbaṃ.* But this is considered as good as relating the whole story.

The fifth *vagga* gives the names of the ten generals of Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī as though the author intended to relate their stories one after the other. But the stories of Nandimitta (story 6, *vagga* ii) and Velusumana (included in story 9, *vagga* iv) are given earlier. So the series begins with Suranimmala, but ends after only four stories. Again, the first story of the *vagga* vi contains only the following abrupt sentence : *Saṃkhepena Duṭṭhagāmaṇī-rañño vatthuṃ paṭhamaṃ.* The second one, the story of Prince Sāli, also is not given, but the reader is requested to learn it from the *Mahāvaṃsa : Sālirājakumāravatthuṃ Mahāvaṃse vuttanayena veditabbaṃ. Sālirājakumāravatthuṃ dutiyaṃ.* Yet this is counted as having been actually told.

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1. See above, p. xxvi.

The commentary on the *gāthā* beginning with *Aniccāvata saṅkhārā* (in *Dhammasoṇḍaka,* the first story of the *vagga* i) is very elaborate and fanciful. Yet it contains such phrases with deep philosophical meanings as *kālavimuttaṃ nissaraṇaṃ nibbānaṃ.* This is the only commentary on a *gāthā* in the whole book.

The *Sahassavatthu* presents a good deal of historical material not found in other sources. It offers, for example, a clue towards the identification of *Dubbiṭṭhi-mahārāja* found in the *Rasavāhinī.*[1] *Brāhmaṇa-Tiyaṃ corabhayaṃ* is the usual phrase found in Pāli commentaries and chronicles, though *-Tiyaṃ* is inexplicable. But the Shv. invariably calls it *Brāhmaṇa-Tissa-corabhayaṃ* (four times). The story of Phussadevatthera is entirely a new thing not found in the Rsv. There is a story of Phussadeva in the Rsv., but he is a well-known general of Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī. Phussadeva Thera of the Shv. is the son of Saddhā-Tissa's sister (*Kaṭaka-nāravāsī Phussadevatthero nāma Saddhā-Tissa-mahārañño bhagi-niyā putto*—that is, this thera is Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī's nephew). The information that Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī or Saddhā-Tissa had a sister is not found anywhere else.

The story of Phussadeva Thera is found in several other works. In the *Samantapāsādikā*[2] the story is given as illustration to show the merits of sweeping. Many details are omitted. Only portions connected with sweeping and Māra's appearance are given. In the Shv. story Māra appears only one day. But here he appears on three successive days, as a monkey, a bull and a lame man. The thera is called Kaṭa-andhakāravasī Pussa-devatthero. In the *Sārasaṅgaha*[3] he is called Kālandhakālavāsī Phussadevatthero and the story gives the same aim, omits many details, likewise describing Māra in the same way. The *Saddharmaratnākara*[4] (a Sinhalese work of the early part of the 15th century) calls him Kālakanda Phussadeva. (According to this Kālakanda Vihāra was in Ruhuṇa.) Here also Māra

1. See my note on *Dubbiṭṭhi-mahārāja* in UCR. Vol. I, No. 2, p. 82.
2. Smp. III, (Col. 1900), p. 376.
3. *Sārasaṅgaha*, p. 33.
4. *Saddharmaratnākara*, p. 334.

appears three days successively in the same forms. Here too many details of the original story are omitted, only those portions connected with the sweeping and Māra's appearance being given. Once again the story is cited as illustration to praise the merits of sweeping. The *Visuddhimagga*[1] knows him as Kaṭakandaravāsī Phussadevatthera. He attained Arahantship by looking at the figure of Buddha created by Māra. No other details are given, not even that he swept the yard, nor that Māra appeared in various forms. The stories referred to above do not mention that Phussadeva was Saddhā-Tissa's sister's son. But all agree that Phussadeva thera attained Arahantship by looking at the figure of the Buddha created by Māra.[2]

The name *Sahassavatthu* suggests that the book would contain one thousand stories. But in fact there are only 94. Such round numbers as thousand and five hunderd were generally used in ancient literature to denote large numbers. But 94 is too small a number to allow of the word *sahassa*, even in such usage.

In this connection Malalasekera offers a very interesting suggestion. He thinks that the word *sahassa* may be the Pāli equivalent of the Sanskrit word *saharsa*, which means "delightful mirthful, gladsome"[3]. Then the title *Sahassavatthu-Aṭṭhakathā* or *Sahassavatthuppakaraṇa* means "Book of Delightful Stories", which is quite plausible. The suggestion seems to be the more reasonable when it is compared with the title of *Rasavāhinī*, which means "mellifluent" or "river of taste" or "flow of taste" or "joy-giver" or "pleasure-producer". Then the two titles *Sahassa* and *Rasavāhinī* mean essentially the same thing. This would support the suggestion that the Rsv. was based on the Shv.

1. Vsm. p. 168.

2. The JA. calls him Kaṭakandhakāravāsī Phussadeva-thero, and gives no details of his life whatever. (JA. V, p. 163.)

3. It may philologically be argued that *saharṣa* ought to give *sahaṃsa* and not *sahassa*, just as *utkarṣa* gives *ukkaṃsa* or *praharṣa* gives *pahaṃsa*. But examples like *varṣa* > *vassa* and *karsaka* > *kassaka* justify the derivation of *sahassa* from *saharṣa*. This may also be considered as a popular derivation, judging from the literary standard of the Shv. *Hassa* may be derived either from *harṣa* or *hāsya*. See PTS Dictionary. Cf. also *tesaṃ idaṃ bhāsitaṃ hassakaṃ yeva sampajjati.* (M. II, p, 183.)

There are numerous sentences in the *Rasavāhinī* which agree word for word with those of the Shv. In the *Kiñcisaṅghāya vatthu* of the Rsv. the *gāthā* uttered by the *devatā* living in king's *chatta* is the same except, for one or two words, as the one found in Shv. The *gāthā* uttered by Goṭha-imbara, after attaining arahantship, is the same in both works, except that the Rsv. *gāthā* is touched up in order to make it more elegant and grammatical.[1]

These considerations prompt the question: Cannot our *Sahassavatthu* be the work of Raṭṭhapāla of Guttavaṅka-Pariveṇa at Mahāvihāra in Anurādhapura which Vedeha, in the 14th century, revised and renamed as *Rasavāhinī?*

Although the *Sahassavatthu* is crude in its language and-arrangement it has much historical value. There is no doubt that the work is based on some reliable old Sinhalese records which were available to the author at the time.

The *Rasavāhinī* is a collection of 103 stories written in Pāli prose interspersed with verses[2]. The book is divided into two parts. The first contains 40 stories connected with Jambudīpa (India), while the second consists of 63 stories dealing with incidents in Laṅkā (Ceylon).

From the colophon we learn that the author of the Rsv. was a thera named Vedeha of the Vanavāsī school who also wrote the *Samantakūṭa-vaṇṇanā*, the well known Pāli poem on the Sri Pāda (or Adam's Peak) in Ceylon, and the *Sīhaḷasaddalakkhaṇa*, a Sinhalese grammar (*?Sidatsaṅgarā*). The name of his teacher is given as Ānanda Vanaratana. The work is generally ascribed to the early part of the 14th century A.C. But the sources, both oral and written, on which the work is based seem to be much older.

1. See below, p. xxxvi.

2. There is a Sinhalese book called *Saddharmālaṅkāraya* written by a thera named Dhammakitti who lived in the Gadalādeṇi Vihāra in the 14th century. This work is obviously a translation of the Rsv., though it contains two stories, *Metteyya-vastu* and *Padmāvatī-vastu*, which are not found in the Rsv. It is not a literal translation, but the stories are retold with ornamental descriptions and similes. The author of the *Saddharmā-laṅkāraya* belonged to the same Vanavāsī fraternity as the author of the Rsv.

In the introduction to the Rsv. the author gives the history of the book. The arahants of old had related in the language of the Island (i.e., Sinhalese) stories from various places, and these stories had been collected together by the ancients (*purātaṇā*); a thera named Raṭṭhapāla residing at the Guttavaṅka-Pariveṇa[1] in the Mahāvihāra had translated this collection of stories into Pāli, but his work was full of mistakes and repetitions. Therefore, said the author : "I shall revise it; listen ye to it attentively. Whereas arahants in olden days related these, therefore verily this relation is ever to be honoured by the good."

Though garbed in a new attire and given the new name of *Rasavāhinī* in the 14th century, the subject-matter of this work goes back to the days of arahants. Besides the statement of the author of the Rsv. there are several other considerations which tend to prove the antiquity of the tradition it embodies.

Scholars are generally agreed that the Rsv. is based on the *Sahassavatthu.* The suggestion has already been ventured that the work of Raṭṭhapāla referred to in the Rsv. introduction may be the same as the Shv. Vedeha says that Raṭṭhapāla merely translated into Pāli the stories related in Sinhalese by arahants. The author of the Shv. admits that his work is based on the *Sīhaḷaṭṭakathā* and the tradition of the teachers.[2] Now the *Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathā* are generally regarded as the works of arahants in Sinhalese. Therefore the statement in the Rsv. that Raṭṭhapāla translated into Pāli stories related in Sinhalese by arahants of old may be taken as referring to our Shv.

A careful perusal of the two texts would support this suggestion. Not only in subject-matter, but also in phrases, idioms and even in whole paragraphs the two texts agree. There is no doubt that the language of the Rsv. is more stylized, more elegant and poetic than that of the Shv. Even so the Rsv. contains a good deal of "Sinhala-Pāli" usages,[3] and Pālicized Sinhalese words.[4]

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1. The *Rsv. Ṭīkā* written by an "ancient teacher" (of unknown, probably late, date) gives the name of the Pariveṇa as Vaṅka(Rsv.Ṭ., p. 3).

2. *Sahassavatthuṃ bhāsissaṃ Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathānayaṃ gaṇhitvā, 'cariyavādañca.*

3. For example, *Rājapuriso sappiṃ tumhe khādāpessāmīti tajjento bhāyāesi* (Rsv. II. p. 33).

4. Such as, *Mahūnela* (Sinh. *Mānel*) "lily" (Rsv. II, pp. 62, 113) and *Poson* (Sinh. *Posom*) "June" (Rsv. II, p. 73).

There are verses in the two texts which agree line for line except in one or two words. Compare, for example, the following verse found in the story of Kiñcisaṅgha of the Rsv.:

Sādhu sādhu kumārike, saddhāya dhammajīvini,
Tvaṃ hi dānaṃ dadamānā sādhupūjā sadā bhavāti

with the verse:

Sādhu sādhu kumārike, saddhāsi dhammajīvini,
Sādhu dānaṃ adāsi tvaṃ sādhupūjā sadā bhavāti

occurring in the story of Kuṇḍisaṅghā of the Shv. Also compare the verse found in the story of Goṭhayimbara in the Rsv.:

Saṅgāmasoṇḍo parasattumaddano
Sūro ca vīro balavā parābhibhū
Ruddassa yakkahassa siram vināsayiṃ
Kilesasīsaṃ ca tato vināsayiṃ

with the following found in the same story in the Shv.:

Saṅgāmasoṇḍo parasattumaddano
Sūro ca vīro ca balavā parābhibhū
Duḷuddassa yakkhassa sīsaṃ sayaṃ vināsayi
Avijjāsīsaṃ ca ahaṃ vināsayiṃ.

There are, however, many places where the two texts differ, particularly with regard to proper names. For example, the Mahāvāpi-Vihāra of the Rsv. is called Mahāvāsa-vihāra in the Shv.; the Kuḍḍarajja of the Rsv. becomes Kaṇḍarajja in the Shv.; the thief Harantika of the Rsv. is named Arati in the Shv. Such examples can be multiplied. Some of these may, of course, be copyists' errors.

On various points the Rsv. gives more details than the Shv., and this may be regarded a sign of later development. When the Shv. says indefinitely *eko bhujago* "a serpent" the Rsv. defines it saying *gonasa-sappo* "a viper" or "an adder". The Shv. says *Goliyagāme caṇḍālaputto*, but the Rsv. precisely says *Helloligāme Bahulo nāma caṇḍālaputto*. The Shv. simply says: *Satāraha gāthaṃ vatvā*, but the Rsv. describes it : *Kassapadasabalena*

desitā Nandabrāhmaṇena ca amhākaṃ Sutasomabodhisattassa kathitā paramatthavantiyo satārahagāthāyo parivattetvā.

But on the other hand, sometimes, particulars that are found in the Shv. are missing in the Rsv. This however is very rare.

From these examples it would appear that if the Rsv. is not based on the Shv. at least both have borrowed from the same sources. What these sources might have been we cannot say.[1]

The tradition embodied in the Rsv. is undoubtedly a very old one, perhaps, going beyond even the period of the Pāli commentaries of the 5th century A.C. A great number of stories in the Rsv. are concerned with previous births, which is a feature of the Jātaka tradition. But there is a striking and fundamental difference between the Rsv. stories and the Jātakas. In the Jātakas invariably animals speak. But in the Rsv. the only animal that speaks is the crow, and that too in its own tongue.[2] The credit goes not to the bird for speaking a human language, as in the Jātakas, but to the man for understanding the language of the bird. The other animals do not speak, even in their own tongue. The mare of Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī, wishing to give her share of food to the bhikkhus, expresses her desire not by word mouth but by such signs as stamping on the ground.[3] Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī's elephant is endowed with great wisdom and understanding. He is allowed to find out a victorious spot, but is incapable of revealing his strategic plans in speech[4]. Even Buddhenī's horse that flies through the air does not speak.[5]

Another feature in the Rsv. which goes to prove the antiquity of its tradition is the presence of miracles in many stories.[6] Some stories in which devatās appear before human beings and converse freely with them on equal terms remind us vividly of the *Vimānavatthu.*[7]

1. See above, p. xxvi.
2. Rsv. II, pp. 52, 64.
3. *Ibid.* II, p. 67.
4. *Ibid.* II, p. 75.
5. *Ibid.* I, p. 11 ff.
6. *E.g.* see *Ibid.* II, pp. 22, 26, 41.
7. *E.g.* see *Ibid.* II, pp. 125, 154, 169.

Most of the *gāthās* in the Rsv. are composed by Vedeha. But many verses from old texts are inserted in various places throughout the book after the usual introductory words *tenāhu porāṇā, vuttaṃ hetaṃ porāṇehi, bhavantettha, tena vuttaṃ.*[1] Only the *Mahāvaṃsa* is mentioned by name among the sources from which the *gāthās* are borrowed.[2]

Of the Laṅkā stories in the Rsv. over fifty per cent. are from Rohaṇa and about fifteen per cent. are from Anurādhapura. Most of the others are scattered in such places as Nāgadīpa, Uttara-passa, Dakkhiṇa-passa and Pacchima-passa. There are some stories the home of which is difficult to locate. All the places referred to above flourished as important centres of Buddhism during the last three centuries B.C. and the early centuries of the Christian era, particularly Rohaṇa. None of the later capitals or places like Pulatthipura (Poḷonnaruva) or Jambuddoṇi (Daṁbadeṇiya) are mentioned in the Rsv., which seems to indicate that the stories came from a collection completed before these centres of Buddhism came into prominence.

The latest king referred to in the Rsv. is Sirināga, who ruled in Anurādhapura from 249 A.C. to 268 A.C. The other king in the Rsv. who ruled after the Christian era is Dubbiṭṭhi (Mahā dāṭhika Mahānāga), 67-79 A.C. But reference is made to an Asiggāhaka-Pariveṇa at Thūpārāma.[3] The title Asiggāhaka "Sword-bearer" was probably inaugurated by Moggallāna I (496-513 A.C.) to honour Silākāla who brought the Kesadhātu, the Hair Relic of the Buddha, from India.[4] Therefore it is likely that the Asiggāhaka-Pariveṇa was built during or aftor this period. All the other kings mentioned in the Rsv. belonged to a pre-Christian date. Kākavaṇṇa-Tissa, Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī, Saddhā-Tissa and Lajji-Tissa are often mentioned.

Malalasekera remarks that a large number of the stories are grouped round the days of Vaṭṭagāmaṇī (29-17 B.C.) in whose reign the Tipiṭaka was committed to writing in Ceylon. He

1. *Ibid.* II, pp. 116, 141, 143, 186.
2. *Ibid.* II, pp. 98, 101, 103, 122.
3. *Ibid.* II, pp. 123, 124.
4. Mhv. xxxix, 49-56. See below, pp. 74, 101.

questions whether there were accretions on an old nucleus, or whether they showed that the original collection was made soon after that date.[1]

The stories of the Rsv. seem to have been extremely popular among the people of Ceylon throughout the ages. It seems that in ancient days bhikkhus, wherever they went, related these stories to the devotees for their moral edification. *Tassa kathaṃ sutvā bhikkhū santuṭṭhā tato paṭṭhāya gāmanigama-rājadhānisu cārikaṃ caramānā manussānaṃ taṃ sampattiṃ vaṇṇetvā manusse dānādisu yojesuṃ.*[2] "Bhikkhus who were pleased by hearing his story, thenceforward, going through villages, market towns and cities, encouraged people in such things as charity by describing to them that prosperity." *Bhikkhū tassa kathaṃ sutvā gata-gataṭṭhāne devaputtena katakammaṃ pakāsentā bahujane dānādisu dasakusala-kammesu niyojesuṃ.*[3] "Bhikkhus after hearing his story, wherever they went, announced the action done by the *devaputta*, and encouraged many people in the ten good activities such as charity."

Such examples show that the stories originated in various places (*tattha-tatthūpapannāni vatthūni*) and told in Sinhalese by the arahants in ancient days (*arahā pure abhāsuṃ dīpabhāsāya*). That these stories were born and grew among the people is evident from popular etymologies of such words as Maṇisuriya and Suranimmala.[4] Attempts to explain proper names are very common among the villagers even today. The Rsv. is so popular that it is used up to this day as the first reader for Pāli students in Buddhist monasteries in Ceylon.

Sometimes the Rsv. offers new information, supplementing what is found in the *Mahāvaṃsa* and elsewhere. Thus, for example, both the Mhv. and the Rsv. agree that Sirināga was an adventurer who became king by force.[5] The Mhv. says that Sirināga was Kuḍḍanāga's brother-in-law. We learn from the

1. PLC. p. 225.
2. Rsv. II, p. 170.
3. *Ibid.* II, p. 13.
4. *E.g.* see *Ibid.* II, pp. 26, 71, 84.
5. Mhv. xxxvi, 21-23; Rsv. II, p. 7.

Rsv. that Sirināga was a brahmin youth, an interesting item of information about the man. If we accept the Rsv. then it is clear that the queen of Kuḍḍanāga was a brahmin lady.

It has been rightly observed that the stories of the Rsv. "are useful to us now, in that they throw new and interesting light on the manners, customs and social conditions of ancient India and Ceylon. Perhaps some of them contain materials of historical importance hidden in their half-mythical tales."[1]

VII. MISCELLANEOUS WORKS IN PALI AND SINHALESE

The *Mahābodhivaṃsa*, which deals with the history of the Bodhi-branch at Anurādhapura and originally brought from the parent tree at Buddhagayā in the 3rd century B.C., is a Pāli prose work written by a thera, now generally accepted as Upatissa. Its date has not yet been settled. The MṬ (about 9th century) refers to a book called the *Mahābodhivaṃsakathā*[2]. Geiger takes this work to be "identical with the *Mahābodhivaṃsa* still in existence."[3] But Malalasekera thinks our *Mahābodhivaṃsa* is later than the MṬ[4]. Śrī Dharmārāma places it somewhere between Buddhaghosa and Sāriputta of the Polonnaruva period.[5] Whatever the date may be, the MBv. is based on an earlier work, dealing with the history of the Bodhi, written in Sinhalese by "ancient Masters" (*pubbācariya-kesarīhi*). This original work is now considered lost.

The MBv. was always held in high esteem both as a work of art and as history of the Bodhi. Several commentarial works on it—such as *MBv-Ṭīkā*, *MBv-parikathā* (i.e., *Dharmapradīpikā*), *MBv-granthipadavivaraṇaya*, *MBv-padārthasannaya*—written at various periods, indicate how important the MBv. was considered by ancient teachers. It was translated into Sinhalese, under the title *Siṃhala-Mahābodhivaṃsa*, by Vilgammula Saṅgharāja in the 14th century during the reign of Parākramabāhu IV.

1. PLC. p. 226.
2. MṬ. p. 412.
3. Dpv. and Mhv. p. 49.
4. MṬ. Intro. p. cvii.
5. *MBv-granthipadavivaraṇaya*, Preface, p. 1.

The *Dāṭhāvaṃsa*, the History of the Tooth Relic, was written in Pāli by Rājaguru Dhammakitti, pupil of Sāriputta of Pulatthipura (Poḷonnaruva), on the invitation of the General Parakkama, in the 12th century A.C. (probably shortly after 1197 A.C.). The author states that his work is based on a history of the Tooth Relic written earlier in Sinhalese (v. 10). The Sinhalese *sannaya* (paraphrase) of the *Dāṭhāvaṃsa* says that this earlier Sinhalese work was written at the time the Tooth was brought to Ceylon during the reign of Kitti-Siri-Meghavaṇṇa (362-389 A.C.)[1]. (This Sinhalese work is not available.) The *Mahāvaṃsa*[2] mentions that King Kitti-Siri-Meghavaṇṇa honoured the Tooth Relic in the manner described in the Chronicle of the Tooth Relic. Perhaps this refers to the old Sinhalese book on which Dhammakitti's work is based. Geiger thinks that the Mhv. reference is to the *Dāṭhādhātuvaṃsa* of Dhammakitti.[3] But Dhammakitti himself says that King Kitti-Siri-Megha caused a record of rites and observances regarding the Tooth Relic to be written and that the kings after him followed those instructions.[4] Dhammakitti's purpose in writing it in Pāli was to benefit the people of other countries who did not read Sinhalese.[5]

The *Nikāyasaṅgraha*, though a very brief history of Buddhism from the Buddha's death to the reign of Bhuvanaikabāhu V (1360-1391 A.C.) of Ceylon, is a work of great importance. It was written by Devarakṣita Jayabāhu Mahāsthavira, generally known as Dharmakīrti II during the reign of Vīrabāhu II (1391-1397 A.C.).

The author bases his work (translating his words) on "the early writings of great elders who were free from fear and favour (*anunaya-pratigha parityakta*) and the contemporary course of events heard and seen."[6] It is very important that the author of the Nks. qualifies the ancient elders as being "free from fear

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1. *Kitsirimē rajayehi Danta-kumārayan daḷadāvahansē vaḍā ā kala ma karana laddā vū budungē daḷadā vahansē sambandhi vū āgamanakrama saṅkhyāta vū vaṃsaya* (p. 4, v. 10).

2. Mhv. xxxvii, 93.

3. Clv. tr. I, p. 7, n. 4.

4. Dāṭhā. 406, 407.

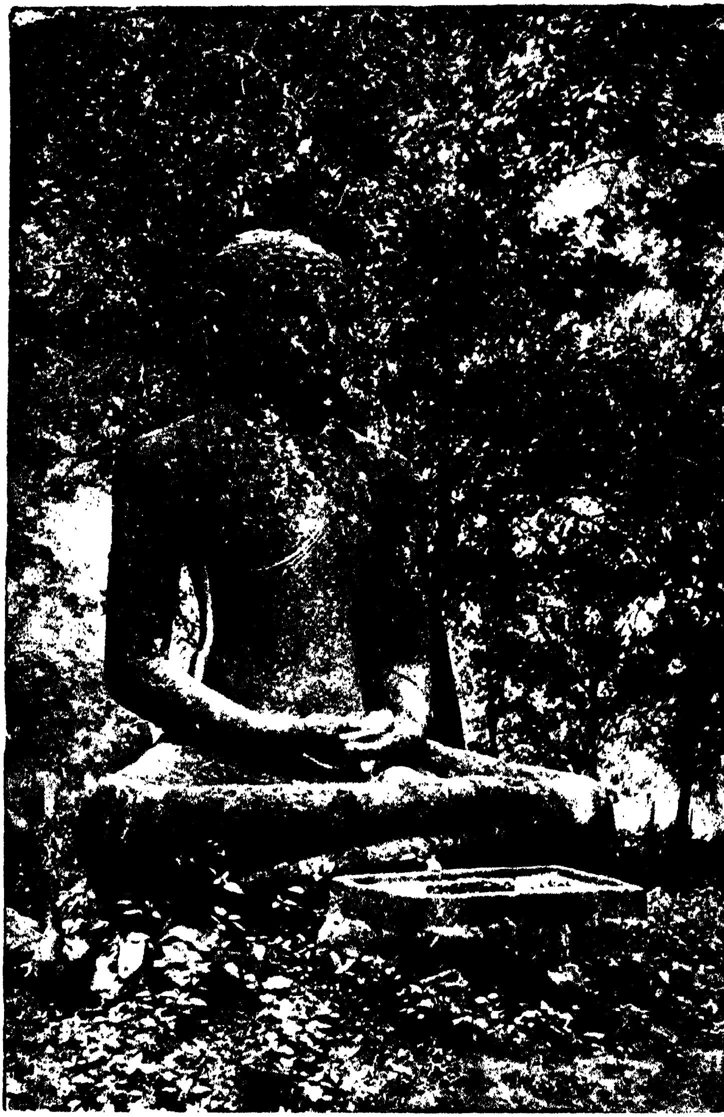
5. *Ibid.* 10.

6. Nks. p. 1.

and favour", thereby suggesting that their writings were unbiassed and not influenced by fear or favour. We may take this statement for what it is worth.

The author of the Nks. seems to have had some knowlodge of many works and of various Buddhist schools to which we have no access today. The Nks. is decidedly the Mahāvihāra tradition of the history of Buddhism in Ceylon.

Several other works of this category, like the *Pūjavaliya*, *Rājāvaliya*, *Rājaratnākaraya*, *Thūpavaṃsa*, and *Dhātuvaṃsa* also contain valuable historical information.



Ceylon Archaeological Survey

BUDDHA STATUE, Outer Circular Road, Anurādhapura.

(now roofed over.)

(p. 124)

1.

INDIAN BACKGROUND

In order to understand and appreciate the history of early Buddhism in Ceylon we should have, as a background, some general idea of the India of the third century B.C. from where Buddhism came to Ceylon, and also of the pre-Buddhist Ceylon to which it was introduced. When the Indian missionaries brought Buddhism to this Island, they carried here with them not only the teaching of the Buddha but also the culture and civilization of Buddhist India. Almost all the Buddhist rites, ceremonies, festivals and observances of Ceylon were, with slight local changes and modifications, the continuation of Indian practices which the early Buddhist missionaries introduced into this country. It is necessary therefore at the very beginning to have an idea of the conditions prevalent in India at the time of the advent of Buddhism to Ceylon.

Buddhism began as an intellectual and ethical movement in the sixth century B.C., with the first sermon preached by the Buddha to the five ascetics at Isipatana near Benares. It spread gradually during the life-time of the Buddha along the Gangetic valley and found its way into several kingdoms in North India between the Vindhya mountains and the Himālayas. Kings and ministers, bankers and wealthy merchants, brahmins and peasants became the followers of this new teaching which was a revolt against some of the accepted theories and practices of the day.

At the time of the Buddha's death, about 483 B.C., almost all the important states in North India seemed to have been deeply influenced by the new teaching. According to the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta*, eight countries claimed, on various grounds, a portion of the ashes of the Buddha—which shows that he had

already gained many ardent devotees in these states. Yet there is no evidence to show that the teaching of the Buddha had been adopted as the state religion of any of these kingdoms till long after his death.

Immediately after the Buddha's death, a Council was held at Rājagaha during the rainy season under the patronage of Ajātasattu, king of Magadha, with Mahā-Kassapa as its president, the most senior of the disciples of the Buddha then alive. Its purpose was to decide and settle the authentic teaching of the Master. The Buddha's immediate disciples, like Ānanda and Upāli, were the principal protagonists in this great event.[1]

About a century later, in the fourth century B.C. during the time of King Kālāsoka of Pāṭaliputta, a group of monks known under the generic name of Vajji bhikkhus, residing at the Mahāvana monastery in Vesāli, raised ten new points of indulgence[2] which perturbed the orthodox authorities. Under the guidance of Yasa, Revata and Sabbakāmī, three leading theras of the day, a great Council was held at Vesāli, and the ten points raised by the Vajji bhikkhus were condemned as false and heretic. The authentic and genuine teaching of the Master was defined for the second time.[3]

After this Second Council, the bhikkhus who were condemned as unorthodox and heretic, assembled elsewhere, held a rival Council and inaugurated a new sect called Mahāsaṅghika (or Mahāsaṅgīti), different from the Theriya sect. The following century saw the rise of eighteen sects in all, including the various schools of the Theravāda.[4]

In the last years of the fourth century B.C., Chandragupta Maurya had founded and organized a large and powerful empire extending approximately from Afghanistan to Mysore. Territories which are even now outside India and West Pakistan were parts of the Indian Empire under Chandragupta.[5]

1. Smp. (SHB), p. 3. ff.; Mhv. Ch. iii.
2. Clvg. pp. 426–428.
3. Smp. (SHB), p. 19 ff.; Mhv. Ch. iv.
4. Mhv. v, 1–13; Nks. pp. 5–6; for details see also Thomas HBT. Appendix II, pp. 288 ff.
5. Mookerji's *Asoka*, p. 12.

Chandragupta's son, Bindusāra, kept his father's empire intact, and perhaps even extended it in the south. About 274 B.C., Bindusāra's son, Asoka, succeeded to this vast empire which had been built by two great emperors under the expert guidance of such able statesmen as Kauṭilya Chāṇakya.

The extent of Asoka's empire can be gauged from the inscriptions published by the emperor himself. Rock Edicts II, V and XIII mention the nations on the borders of his dominions. In the south, the limits were the Cholas, Pāndyas, Satiyaputras[1] and Keralaputras. In the north, his empire extended as far as the foot of the Himālayas. Buildings in Kashmir and Nepal show that these countries too were parts of his kingdom. Towards the north-west, it extended as far as the territory of the Syrian king, Antiochus, and hence stretched as far as Persia and Syria which were under Antiochus. The Yavanas, Kambojas and Gandhāras are mentioned as the peoples living on the borders in the north-west. It should be mentioned here that Asoka's grandfather Chandragupta had, in about 304 B.C. and after a successful campaign, wrested from Seleucus, one of Alexander's generals, the four satrapies of Aria, Arachosia, Gedrosia and the Paropanisadai. To this should be added the Kaliṅga country which Asoka himself had, in about 262 B.C., conquered after a devastating war.

"The Government of India under Asoka was an absolute monarchy in the legal and political sense of the term. Nevertheless autocracy in India was much more limited in many directions than the autocracies of the West."[2]

Society was composed of religious and secular classes. The former was divided into Brāhmaṇas, Śramaṇas and Pāsaṇḍas. Among the Pāsaṇḍas the most prominent, in Asoka's time, were Nirgranthas, and Ājīvikas to whom the emperor had granted some rock-cut caves. The popular religion of the time seems to have been full of trivial ceremonies and superstitions, as found in Rock Edict IX. The conception of family life appears to have been of an elevated standard. Even the claims of animals to

1. Kāñchi has been sought to be identified with this name.

2. Mookerji : *op. cit.* p. 47.

kind treatment were recognized. It was the duty of the householders to honour and support śramaṇas, brāhmaṇas and other religious ascetics. Special attention was paid to the welfare and uplift of women. There were ministers, named *Strī-adhyakṣa-mahāmātras*, who were in charge of the affairs of women.[1]

Intellectual life centred chiefly in monasteries. But learning and culture seem to have spread even among the masses. The fact that Asoka's Edicts were written not in Sanskrit but in vernacular dialects, on the assumption that the masses would read and understand them, indicates a high standard of literacy among the ordinary people. Vincent A. Smith says : "I think it likely that the percentage of literacy among the Buddhist population in Asoka's time was higher than it is now in many provinces in British India."[2]

In Asoka's time there were many large cities in India, such as Pāṭaliputra and Vedisa. Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador of Seleucus to the Court of Chandragupta, describes Pāṭaliputra as having a wall defended by 570 towers and pierced by a number of gates. Around the city was a ditch 600 feet broad and 30 cubits deep.[3] The building of Śrīnagar in Kashmir and city in Nepal are attributed to Asoka himself. The country was full of great monasteries such as the Asokārāma in Pāṭaliputra and stūpas such as those of Sāñchi and Bhārhut. "The truth is that, so far as Buddhism is concerned, the cult of the relic-stūpa was virtually initiated by Asoka."[4]

Asoka was not a Buddhist by birth. Although we are not quite certain about the religion of his father and grandfather, we can be sure that they were non-Buddhists. A Jain tradition, which is neither corroborated nor contradicted elsewhere, says that his grandfather Chandragupta was or became a Jain, and towards the end of his life abdicated to spend his last days as an ascetic.[5] The *Divyāvadāna* records that an Ājīvika saint named Piṅgalavatsa was invited by King Bindusāra in connection with

1. R.E. XII.
2. Quoted by Mookerji : *op. cit.* p. 102.
3. *Cambridge Shorter History of India*, p. 35.
4. Sir John Marshall : *The Monuments of Sanchi*, I, p. 21.
5. *Cambridge Shorter History of India*, p. 34.

the question of Asoka's succession to the throne[1]. The *Mahā-vaṃsa-Ṭīkā*,[2] borrowing from the old Sinhalese commentary on the *Majjhima-nikāya*, relates a story[3] which says that an Ājīvika named Janasāna was the family-priest of the royal house of Bindusāra, and that Janasāna was a naked ascetic. We may infer from this that he was a Jain belonging to the Digambara sect. The *Mahāvaṃsa-Ṭīkā*[4] has another reference to this same Janasāna which says that he was the friend and counsellor of Bindusāra's queen. Both the *Samantapāsādikā*[5] and the *Mahāvaṃsa*[6] agree that Bindusāra was of brāhmaṇic faith (*Brāhmaṇa-bhatto*), that he entertained brahmins and brāhman ascetics of various orders and that Asoka followed his father's practice for three years but that in the fourth year, after his coronation, he became a Buddhist. The grant by Asoka of certain caves[7] to Ājīvikas also indicated that he honoured his ancestral religion which he himself had followed for a time.

Asoka became an *upāsaka*, that is, a lay Buddhist, a few years after his coronation. But for about two or three years he was indifferent to his new faith. It was only after he came into close contact with the Saṅgha,[8] the Order of Buddhist monks, that he

1. Mookerji ; *op. cit.* p. 3, 5. 2. MṬ. pp. 192-3.
3. Not found in Buddhaghosa's Pāli Commentary on M.
4. MṬ. p. 190. 5. Smp. (SHB), p. 25. 6. Mhv. v. 34.
7. Nigrodha and Khalatika caves on the Barabar Hill.
8. Minor Rock Edict I (Brahmagiri) has the phrase *saṃghe upayīte*, which is generally translated as "visited the Saṅgha". Some scholars took this to mean that actually Asoka became a bhikkhu. Mookerji thinks that this might indicate the stage of a *bhikkhu-gatika*. See also Barua's note on the phrase (*Inscriptions of Asoka*, II, p. 334). In fact, it is not *bhikkhu-gatika*, but *bhikkhu-bhatika* "dependent on bhikkhus" (see *Mahavagga*, Ceylon ed., p. 175; also DA. p. 717) which, according to Buddhaghosa, means "a person living with bhikkhus in the same vihāra" (*bhikkhu-bhatiko'ti ekasmiṃ vihāre bhikkhūhi saddhiṃ vasanakapuriso* (Smp., III, Colombo, 1900, p. 222). PTS. Pāli Dictionary also has the reading *bhikkhu gatika* (see under *-gatika*), probably misled by wrongly edited texts. A badly written Sinhalese ඹ *bka* can easily be mistaken to be ග *ga* by an inexperienced eye.

Asoka's closer connection with the Saṅgha may have been either by way of associating with them intimately or, perhaps, living with them in the same vihāra for some time, in order to get deeper insight into the dharma. Nks. p. 7 records that Asoka lived with Moggaliputta-Tissa Thera at the vihāra for seven days in order to study various systems of religion (*Moggaliputta mahaterun vahanse karā eḷaṁla sat davasak vihārayehi ma randā siyalu samayāntara igena*). It is interesting to note here that Lian-u-thi (5th century A.C.), the Chinese emperor who tried to follow Asoka, and was hence generally regarded as the Chinese Asoka, also lived in a vihāra with bhikkhus.

became really devoted to Buddhism, and gave himself up to the exercise of piety. The *Mahāvaṃsa*[1] says that Asoka in early days was known as Caṇḍāsoka (Asoka the Cruel) because of his atrocities, but that later when he became a pious man he was known as Dhammāsoka (Asoka the Pious).[2]

After witnessing that terrible destruction of human life and the enormous suffering involved in the Kaliṅga war, in the eighth year of his coronation[3] and through the good influence of the Saṅgha, Asoka became a changed man. This was the turning point in his life. "His Sacred Majesty's observance of Dharma, love of Dharma, and his preaching of Dharma became intense."[3] He sheathed his sword never to draw it again for any more conquests, and thence forward he concentrated on moral and spiritual conquest called "*Dharmavijaya*, which is considered by His Sacred Majesty to be the chief conquest."[3]

As the Bhābru Edict and the Pillar Edicts of Sārnāth, Kausāmbī and Sāñchi show, Buddhism now became the chief concern of Asoka. He was the first king to make Buddhism the state religion of India ; and Ceylon, which recieved Buddhism from Asoka, followed that tradition up to the last days of the Sinhalese sovereignty. In the Bhābru Edict addressed to the Saṅgha, Asoka recommends to the brethren and sisters of the Order, and to the lay disciples of either sex, the frequent hearing of and meditation upon seven selected texts of the Pāli canon. The Pillar Edicts of Sārnāth, Kausāmbī and Sāñchi order that any bhikkhu or bhikkhunī who brings about schism in the Saṅgha should be disrobed and should not be allowed to live in a monastery. Thus the emperor took active interest in the welfare of the religion, assuming its temporal leadership.

Asoka's new religion seems to have transformed the whole of his life and character. Most of time-honoured customs and institutions associated with royalty were abolished as being

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1. Mhv. v, 189.

2. Mookerji thinks that these legends were meant to glorify the religion which could transmute base metal into gold (*Asoka*, p. 5). But, in fact, there is in Rock Edict XIII a striking note of remorse and repentance for his cruelties in the Kaliṅga war, which shows that he had been at that time a *caṇḍa* "cruel" person. See also Mookerji, p. 165, n. 6.

3. R.E. XIII.

contrary to the spirit of his new faith, and others substituted. The change of heart wrought by his new faith impressed itself not only upon his personal life, but also upon his public policy and administration. After the Kaliṅga war, which was his last political adventure, he gave up war altogether. Rock Edict XIII says that "even if anyone does positive harm to him, he would be considered worthy of forgiveness by His Sacred Majesty, so far as he can possibly be forgiven." Regarding the people of lands adjoining his territories Asoka says in Kaliṅga Edict II "that the king desires that they should have no fear of me, that they should trust me, and receive from me happiness, not sorrow." He declared in Rock Edict IV that "in consequence of the practice of morality by His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King the sound of the war drum has become the call (not to arms but) to Dharma."

Asoka's active interest in, and deep devotion to, Buddhism did not result in the disparagement of other religions. On the contrary, he honoured all religions and rendered them material help.

This spirit of religious tolerance had been taught to his disciples by the Buddha himself. The *Upāli-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya* records of Upāli, a prominent and wealthy householder of Nālandā, who was a lay disciple of Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta (Jaina Mahāvīra), that he expressed his desire to become an *upāsaka* (a lay follower of the Buddha). The Master advised him to continue the practice of attending on Nigaṇṭhas with requisites even after becoming a Buddhist *upāsaka*. Asoka was evidently deeply impressed by this example of religious tolerance.

He says in Pillar Edict VI : "All sects are also honoured by me with various offerings." And again : "His Sacred Majesty desires that in all places should reside people of diverse sects."[1] He was interested in "the growth of the essential teachings of all religious sects."[2] Asoka did not want the adherents of one sect to insult those of another. He says in Rock Edict XII that "there

1. R.E. VII.
2. R.E. XII.

should not be honour of one's own sect and condemnation of others' sects .... On the other hand the sects of others should be honoured for this ground or that. Thus doing, one helps one's own sect to grow, and benefits the sects of others too. Doing otherwise, one harms one's own sect and injures the sects of others. For whosoever honours his own sect and condemns the sects of others wholly from devotion to his own sect.... injures more gravely his own sect on the contrary. Hence concord is commendable in this sense that all should listen and be willing to listen to the doctrines professed by others."

Liberality to brāhamaṇas and śramaṇas without distinction was emphasized in his Edicts as a public duty, just as it is emphasized in Pāli Texts.

As a wise and large-hearted ruler of a vast empire consisting of various religious denominations, Asoka was at pains to evolve a system of morality which would appeal to all his subjects of various faiths. So he adapted the word "*Dharma*", frequently used in his Edicts, to embrace obedience and respect to parents, elders and teachers ; proper treatment and liberality towards ascetics, brāhmaṇas and śramaṇas, relations, friends, acquaintances and companions, servants, dependants, the poor and the miserable; abstention from the slaughter of living creatures; kindness, truthfulness, inner and outer purity, gentleness, saintliness, self-control, gratitude, firm devotion and attachment to morality ; and even moderation in spending and saving. This code of morality propounded by Asoka under the word "*Dharma*"[1] was acceptable to followers of diverse sects and denominations, to ascetics and house-holders, to peoples outside as well as within his empire, to wild tribes as well as to civilized nations, to non-Indians as well as to Indians. Thus Asoka attempted at founding a universal religion, and his was probably the first historical attempt.

Asoka adopted various methods of promoting the moral welfare of his people. According to Pillar Edict VII he caused religious messages to be proclaimed and religious injunctions to be laid down. He employed *Dharma-mahāmātras* and other

1. It is interesting to note that the word "*dhamma*" in Pāli literature has even a wider connotation.

officers of various grades in order to spread his message of piety among all sects and peoples—Buddhists, Jains, Ājīvikas and others. This Department of *Dharma-mahāmātras* for the moral and spiritual welfare of his subjects was entirely Asoka's own innovation. He undertook pilgrimages (*dharma-yātrā*) to give advice to his subjects as well as to see holy places, in substitution for the old royal practice of hunting and pleasure expeditions.[1] Not only did he himself go on pilgrimage, but he also instructed his higher officials to follow his example as part of their duty.[2] In order to appeal to the religious instincts of the people and to stimulate them to the virtuous life, Asoka organized, instead of the military parades of his predecessors, shows and processions in which were exhibited images of gods in their celestial cars, with elephants and illuminations and "heavenly sights" attractive and fascinating to the masses.[3] Even the preaching of the Buddhist texts mentioned in the Bhābru Edict seems to have been accompanied by religious festivals.[4]

Asoka's "Kingdom of Piety" was not limited to human beings. Rock Edict II says that the emperor had instituted "medical treatment of man and medical treatment of beast; medical herbs, also those wholesome for man and wholesome for beast, have been caused to be imported and to be planted in all places where they did not exist." Rock Edict I orders that "not a single living creature should be slaughtered and sacrificed." The emperor at the same time stopped the killing of animals for the use of the royal kitchens. The protection of animal life throughout the empire was proclaimed. According to Pillar Edict V the emperor had prohibited the killing of certain animals, castration and branding of animals and fishing, particularly on certain specified days and Buddhist *uposatha* days. He had ordered that even "husks with living things therein must not be burned. Forests for nothing or for violence (to living creatures) must not be burned. The living must not be nourished with the

1. R.E. VIII.
2. R.E. III.
3. R.E. IV.
4. See under Ariyavaṃsa in Ch. XVI.

living." In Pillar Edict VII Asoka says : "On the high roads too banyan trees were caused to be planted by me that they might give shade to cattle and men, mango gardens were caused to be planted, and wells were caused to be dug by me at half *-kos*, rest houses were caused to be built, many watering stations were caused to be established by me, here and there, for the comfort of cattle and men."

Asoka was not satisfied with working for the welfare only of his own subjects. He extended his attention to lands outside his empire—particularly to those that lay next to his dominions. Rock Edict II, which contains what is probably a reference to Ceylon, declares: "Everywhere within the dominions of His sacred and Gracious Majesty the king, and likewise among the frontages such as the Cholas, Pāndyas, Satiyaputras, Keralaputras, what is (known as) Tambapamṇī,[1] the Greek King Antiochus, and those kings, too, who are the neighbours of that Antiochus—everywhere have been instituted by His sacred and Gracious Majesty two kinds of medical treatment—medical treatment of man and medical treatment of beast. Medical herbs also, those wholesome for man and wholesome for beast, have been caused to be imported and to be planted in all places where they did not exist. Roots also, and fruits, have been caused to be imported

1. There is difference of opinion as to whether Tambapaṃṇī in Asoka's inscriptions meant Ceylon or a region in the valley of the river Tāmraparṇī in the Tinnevelly district in South India. Barua has a long discussion on the word Tambapaṃṇī in his work, *Inscriptions of Asoka*, Part II, pp. 235-6. Vincent A. Smith takes the word to mean not Ceylon, but the river Tāmraparṇī in Tinnevelly. Raychaudhuri prefers to take it to mean Ceylon. Megasthenes refers to Ceylon as Taprobane (Tāmraparṇī), which shows that the Island was known by that name throughout India and beyond even earlier than the time of Asoka. Barua in not definite as to what it means. At the end of the discussion he says: "The Buddhist chronicles of Ceylon, written in Pāli and Sinhalese, speak definitely of a religious mission despatched by Asoka to the island of Tāmraparṇī during the reign of Devānampiya Tissa for the propagation of Buddhism there, and the tradition thereof is embodied even in a Pāli Canonical work, the *Parivārapāṭha*, which was compiled in about the beginning of the Christian era. But this literary tradition should not create a bias in favour of Ceylon when we are dealing with Asoka's Edicts on their own strength". But Mookerji is definite that Asoka's Tambapaṃṇī means Ceylon. He says: "Besides, the ruler of a large empire cannot be expected to think of a petty boundary like a river in Tinnevelly to indicate the peoples beyond his frontiers. Finally, Ceylon, to which his son gave its religion, must naturally figure prominently as the objective of his 'moral conquests', his humanitarian work." (*op. cit.* p. 132 n. 2.)

and to be planted everywhere where they did not exist. On the roads wells also have been caused to be dug and trees caused to be planted for the enjoyment of man and beast."

But all this tremendous and extensive work for social welfare at home and abroad could not give full satisfaction to the religious and spiritual mind of Asoka. All this was temporary, material help, and there was nothing far-reaching in these gifts. He felt strongly that "there is no such gift as the gift of *dharma*" (*nāsti etārisaṃ dānaṃ yārisaṃ dhammadānaṃ*).[1]

Therefore he created, for the purpose of spreading the dharma a new department, a sort of goodwill mission, of *Dharma-mahāmātras* who "were non-existent previously" (*na bhūtapruva*).[2] Rock Edict V says that they were employed among all sects for the establishment and growth of dharma and for the good and happiness of those devoted to religion. They were employed among the Yonas, Kambojas,Gandhāras and the other peoples on his western borders. They were also employed among the soldiers and their chiefs, brāhmaṇical sects and house-holders, the destitute, the infirm and the aged, for the good and the happiness and the freedom from molestation of those who had applied themselves to dharma. They were also empowered to take steps against imprisonment and for granting release to those that had numerous offspring or were overwhelmed by misfortune or afflicted with age.

Asoka speaks in his Rock Edict XIII of the great success of his moral conquest called *Dharma-vijaya*, which "is considered by His Sacred Majesty the principal conquest, and this has been repeatedly won by His Sacred Majesty both here (in his dominions) and among all the frontier peoples." His *Dharma-vijaya* was successful even in the kingdoms of Antiochus of Syria, Ptolemy of Egypt, Antigonus of Macedon, Magas of Cyrene, Alexander of Epirus [3]and also in the kingdoms of Cholas and Pandyas as far as Tāmraparṇī (Ceylon). Further he says : "Everywhere are people following the religious injunction of His Sacred Majesty.

1. R.E. XI, cf. also *sabbadānaṃ dhammadānaṃ jināti* "the gift of the dhamma excels all (other) gifts". (Dhp. xxiv, 21.)

2. R.E. V.

3. *Cambridge Shorter History of India*, p. 45.

Even those to whom envoys of His Sacred Majesty do not go, having heard His Sacred Majesty's practice, ordinances, and injunctions of dharma, themselves follow and will follow the dharma. The conquest that is won by this means everywhere, that conquest, again, everywhere is productive of a feeling of love. Love is won in moral conquests."

The Pāli tradition of Ceylon[1] records that on Moggaliputta-Tissa Thera's instructions Asoka made his son Mahinda and his daughter Saṅghamittā enter the order of the Saṅgha so that the emperor might become a *sāsanadāyāda*, an inheritor or a kinsman of Buddhism, for so far he was only a *paccayadāyaka*, giver of wealth or requisites, by which means alone he had no right to claim relationship with the Buddhasāsana. Allured by the high status and comforts granted to the Saṅgha by the emperor, undesirable and corrupting elements entered the Order, thereby disturbing its unity and peace. There sprang up various new schools which were contrary to the accepted theories and practices of the orthodox. Asoka was compelled therefore to hold at Pāṭaliputra a *saṅgīti*, which is generally called the Third Council,[2] "to settle authoritatively the Canon of the Scriptures and rid the Church of dissensions,but his concern was more for the unity of the State-established Church than for any metaphysical or theological doctrines."[3] Those who were ejected from the fold of the orthodox held a separate council of their own at Nālandā near Rājagaha. Out of this new community there arose nine new sects who composed their own scriptures.[4] He was so concerned for the unity of the Saṅgha that he issued strict orders by way of Edicts,[5] that anyone who tried to bring about schism in the Saṅgha should leave the robes and should not live in a monastery. "By the consensus of opinion the text of Asoka's ordinance confirms the authenticity of the Pāli tradition concerning the Third of Pāṭaliputra Council."[6]

1. Smp. (SHB), p. 29; Mhv. v. 191 ff.
2. Smp. (SHB), p. 35 ; Mhv. v. 228 ff.
3. Sir John Marshall : *The Monuments of Sanchi*, I, p. 22.
4. Nks. pp. 7-8.
5. Pillar Edicts of Sārnāth, Kausāmbī and Sāñchi.
6. Barua : *Inscriptions of Asoka*, II, p. 379.

After this Council, under the instructions of the far-sighted Moggaliputta-Tissa, the President of the Council, missionaries for the establishment of Buddhism were sent out to nine countries among which Ceylon was included.[1] Asoka's own son Mahinda was entrusted with the task of establishing Buddhism in Ceylon. The emperor, perhaps, felt that his work would be most fruitful in this Island, for Devānampiya-Tissa, the king of Ceylon, had already expressed his friendship by sending ambassadors with valuable gifts to the Indian emperor.[2] Wherever they went the Indian Buddhist missionaries were successful. Even Greeks like Yonaka Dhammarakkhita became Buddhist bhikkhus. But Ceylon was the most fertile of all fields for the Buddhist activities of Asoka. "So far as Edicts are concerned, Ceylon is mentioned as Tāmraparṇī in Rock Edicts II and XIII and as the country already included by Asoka in the list of Countries to which he despatched his *Dutas* or messengers to prosecute his scheme of *Dharma Vijaya* or Moral Conquest. Thus by the time of these Edicts (258-257 B.C.), Ceylon was already a sphere of Asoka's missionary activities which, according to Rock Edict II, included welfare work and positive social service such as measures for the relief of suffering of beast and man. As the date of Mahendra's work in Ceylon was much later (252 B.C.), a reference to it was not possible in Asoka's Edicts, which,however, tell of his relations with Ceylon that must have prepared the ground for Mahendra's work."[3]

1. Smp. (SHB), p. 37; Mhv. xii, 1 ff.
2. See further the next chapter.
3. Mookerji : *op. cit.* p. 36.

2.

PRE-BUDDHIST CEYLON I: SOCIAL CONDITIONS

In the third century B.C. the capital of Ceylon was Anurādhapura. It was Paṇḍukābhaya (377-307 B.C.) who developed the original Anurādhagāma into a real *nagara* or city,[1] and he seems to have organized it very efficiently. Before Paṇḍukābhaya there was nothing which could precisely have been called a city in Ceylon. All centres of population were called *gāmas* "villages". But the words *gāma* and *nagara* in the early part of the *Mahāvaṃsa* are used indiscriminately both for "village" and "city" or "town,"[2] and do not help us to decide on the size and extent of a place. Before Anurādhapura came into prominence there

1. Mhv. x, 75.

2. In Pāli the use of the two terms is quite clear; *gāma* means "village" and *nagara* means "city" or "town", e.g., *tena kho pana samayena Sunidha-Vassakārā Magadhamahāmattā Pāṭaligāme nagaraṃ māpenti Vajjīnaṃ paṭibāhāya* "at that time two chief ministers of Magadha, Sunidha and Vassakāra, are building a city (*nagaraṃ*) in the Pāṭali village (*gāma*) in order to hold back Vajjins". (D. II, p. 53.) But in the early part of the Mhv. this distinction is not observed, e.g., Mhv. vii, 41 says that the ministers of Vijaya built *gāme* "villages" in various places. In the list of these villages Vijita-nagara is included—*Vijitaṃ nagaraṃ* (Mhv. vii, 45). Again, Mhv. x, 42 says : *Kalahaṃ nagaraṃ nāma gāmo tattha kato ahu* "a village (*gāma*) named Kalaha city or Kalaha town (*nagaraṃ*) was built there". Mahāgāma in Rohaṇa was always called Mahā-gāma "Great Village", even after it became the capital of the southern principality, vying with Anuradhapura in power and prosperity. Ptolemy, in his map of Ceylon in the first century A.C., calls Anurādhapura *Anourogrammon.* He used the termination "grammon" (=*grāma* or *gāma* "village") even at a time when Anurādhapura was greatly developed and admittedly the capital of Ceylon. Compare Buddhaghosa's words : *yassa gāmassa Anurādhapurassera dve indakhīlā.* (Smp., SHB. p. 214). *Gāma*, it appears, was used in its original sense of "group", "collection", "community" or "settlement."

were other places like Tambapaṇṇi, Vijitapura, and Upatissagāma which served as the seats of government for short periods. But from the time Anurādhapura was raised by Paṇḍukābhaya to the eminence of a city in the latter part of the fourth century B.C. it remained as the capital of Laṅkā for about twelve centuries.

By the end of the third century B.C. the architectural development of Anurādhapura seems to have reached a fairly high stage. Paṇḍukābhaya's grand-uncle, Anurādha, who originally established the village of Anurādhagāma calling it after his own name, built for himself a house which was called Rājageha.[1] When Paṇḍukābhaya entered Anurādhapura after the destruction of his enemies, the old chief offered his house to his victorious grand-nephew, and went to live in another house.[2] Paṇḍukābhaya is not reported to have built a palace for his residence. But there is mention made of various buildings erected by Paṇḍukābhaya in Anurādhapura and its suburbs.[3] We are told also of a particular building called *Ekathūṇika* in Upatissagāma the seat of government before Anurādhapura. This house, which, as its name implies, stood on one pillar, was constructed by Paṇḍukābhaya's uncles for the specific purpose of imprisoning their sister Cittā, in a futile attempt to prevent her from begetting a son. It was ventilated with windows (*gavakkha*).[4]

All the same, there seem to have been a few buildings in Anurādhapura even in the time of Devānampiya-Tissa (247-207 B.C.). Perhaps building materials and experienced architects were lacking. Devānampiya-Tissa could not, for instance, find a suitable house as residence for Mahinda. He hurriedly builds a house of mud and dries it with "torch-fire". On account of the method adopted for drying it, the walls become dark and the

1. Mhv. ix, II. This is particularly mentioned because this house might, perhaps, have been built according to a plan that Anurādha copied from North India.

2. *Ibid.* x, 73, 74.

3. *Ibid.* x, 95-102.

4. *Ibid.* ix, 15. (See also JRAS. C.B. New Series. VII, Pt, I, 1960, pp. 70-73.)

house came to be called Kālapāsāda-pariveṇa, "Dark Residence."[1] How the house was built is not quite clear. But it is evident that there were no burnt bricks available for the purpose, at least locally or within easy reach.

Devānampiya-Tissa would never have offered such a residence as this to the great royal missionary, son of Emperor Asoka and a visitor from India, if he had been in a position to provide more suitable accommodation.

It may be argued that Devānampiya-Tissa, out of great respect, did not wish to offer the holy man a house which had been occupied by others. But this does not seem likely, because Devānampiya-Tissa invited Mahinda, on the second day of his arrival, to spend the night in a house in Mahāmeghavana and the latter consented[2]. The house had undoubtedly been used by other people—at least by the king and his queens and other members of the royal family.

It would seem that there was no large hall in the city for a public gathering. When the townspeople desired to see and hear Mahinda, the king, seeing that there was no room within the premises of the palace, ordered the hall of the State Elephant to be cleansed and arranged for the purpose.[3] It was here that the citizens assembled to listen to the royal monk. As Mahinda's audience grew bigger and bigger, the venue had to be shifted from the Elephant Hall to the "pleasant" Nandana Garden outside

1. Mhv. xv, 203, 204.

Geiger translates the works *sīghaṃ ukkāya sukkhāpetvāna mattikā* as "he had the bricks of clay dried speedily with fire". (Mhv. tr. xv, 203.) But *mattikā* does not mean "bricks"; it means "mud" or "clay". If bricks were meant the word *iṭṭhikā*, which is the correct one, could have been used without any difficulty. Kālapāsāda-pariveṇa seems to have been a house built of wattle and daub. Perhaps lumps of clay were dried with fire (torches ?), for the work had to be finished in a hurry, or may be the walls were dried artificially after construction. Devānampiya-Tissa is reported to have employed men to make bricks for Thūpārāma Cetiya. (Mhv. xvii, 38.) So brick-making was known at the time. It may also be that the Mhv. contains only a conjectural explanation for the name Kālapāsāda-pariveṇa. Such imaginary esplanations of proper names are quite popular. (Cf. explanations of Labugāmaka, Mhv. x, 72; Maṇisuriya and Suranimmala, Rsv. II pp. 26, 71, 84; Licchavi, Vajji and Vesāli, SnA, pp. 202-203.)

2. *Ibid.* xv, 12, 13.

3. *Ibid.* xiv, 61; Smp. (SHB), p. 47.

the southern gate of the city, where open-air meetings were held "in the royal park thickly, shaded, cool and covered with verdure."[1]

These instances would show that there was a general lack of buildings in Anurādhapura at the time. It was only after the introduction of Buddhism that massive buildings like the Lohapāsāda began to rise in Ceylon. Although various religious buildings are said to have been built by Paṇḍukābhaya,[2] there is no evidence of the existence of a single building spacious enough to accommodate large assemblies. This further indicates that either no public meetings were held, or if at all, they were held in the open air. Perhaps it may be that it was only after the introduction of Buddhism that the people of Ceylon began to hold organized public gatherings for specific purposes such as listening to a religious discourse.

Sanitary conditions in Anurādhapura seem to have been of a high order. During Paṇḍukābhaya's time there were scavengers (of the Caṇḍāla caste) 500 in number for cleaning the city, 200 for cleaning the sewers ; 150 for taking dead bodies away to the cemeteries ; and 150 as watchers.[3]

Paṇḍukābhaya is reported to have created a new post called *Nagara-guttika* (Guardian of the City) for his uncle Abhaya, his predecessor, who was helpful both to Paṇḍukābhaya and his mother. The duty of this officer was the administration of the government for the night-time (*ratti-rajjaṃ*). From that time onward there were *Nagara-guttikas* in the capital.[4] This perhaps was the prototype of mayor in later times.

There were two parks near the capital. The Nandanavana (or Jotivana, as it was called later) almost adjoined the city just outside the southern gate. It was here that Mahinda delivered most of his sermons immediately after his arrival.[5] The Mahāmeghavana, which was laid out by Paṇḍukabhaya's son, Muṭasiva,

1. Mhv. xv, 1–2.
2. *Ibid.* x, 90–102.
3 *Ibid.* x, 91–92.
4. *Ibid.* x, 80–81. (See PTS. *Pali-English Dictionary* s.v. *Nagara.*)
5. *Ibid.* xv, 1 ff.

was "provided with fruit trees and flower trees."[1] This was neither too near nor too far from the city, and was situated outside the eastern gate of the city.[2] There was in this park a pavilion (*Rāja-geha* "Royal house") built for the use of the king. It was in this house (or pavilion) that Mahinda spent several days soon after his arrival.[3] Within the park were beautiful tanks and ponds. Mention is made of a little tank called Kakudhavāpi within the enclosure,[4] and also a beautiful pond called Marutta to the north of the royal pavilion.[5]

Paṇḍukābhaya built a tank to supply water to the city,[6] although there was already a tank built by Anurādha, his grand-uncle.[7] Outside the city there was a general cemetery called Mahāsusāna laid out by Paṇḍukābhaya, and there was also a place of execution.[8]

The Caṇḍālas, who were employed in the city, had their village known as Caṇḍālagāma to the north-west of the general cemetery.[9] This village seems to have had a population at least of about 2,000 people during Paṇḍukābhaya's time, judging from the numbers given in the *Mahāvaṃsa*.[10] To the north-east of this village there was a cemetery, exclusively for caṇḍālas, known as Nīcasusāna (Lower cemetery).[11] Mention is made of a stable for horses (*assamaṇḍala*) near the city during the time of Devānampiya-Tissa.[12] There were also four suburbs (*dvāragāma*) laid out by Paṇḍukābhaya.[13]

1. Mhv. xi, 2.
2. *Ibid.* xv, 8, 11.
3. *Ibid.* xv, 12, 30.
4. *Ibid.* xv, 52.
5. *Ibid.* xv, 30; MṬ. p. 344.
6. *Ibid.* x, 88.
7. *Ibid.* ix, 11.
8. *Ibid.* x, 89; MBv. p. 84.
9. *Ibid.* x, 93; MBv. p. 84.
10. *Ibid.* x, 91–92.
11. *Ibid.* x, 94.
12. MBv. p. 85.
13. Mhv. x, 88.

By the third century B.C. practically the whole of Ceylon, with the exception of the hilly country and the eastern coast,[1] seems to have been populated, though not very thickly perhaps. Almost all the habitable spots were occupied. Henry Parker argues in favour of Mahāgāma and its surrounding villages as the first settlements of the early Aryans who landed here, Kirinda in the south (according to him) being the actual landing place. He says that all the early settlements of the leading chiefs were termed *gāma* "village", and the capital became Mahāgāma "the great village" of the country.[2]

Whether we agree with this suggestion or not there is no doubt that the area watered by the rivers Valavēgaṅga, Kirindi-oya, Māṇik-gaṅga and Kumbukkan-oya in the south was one of the earliest settlements in this Island. In the third century B.C. there was a Kṣatriya clan at Kājaragāma (modern Kataragama). The representatives of these Kṣatriyas were among the distinguished personages who attended the celebrations held in honour of the Bodhi-branch brought from India by Saṅghamittā.[3] One of the first Bo-saplings was planted at Kājaragāma.[4] Devānampiya-Tissa's brother, the vice-regent Mahānāga, in order to escape the dangerous consequences of the queen's treachery, fled with his family from Anurādhapura to Rohaṇa, and ruled in Mahāgāma.[5] The fact that Mahānāga, when he was in danger, went at once to Mahāgāma suggests that the Kṣatriyas there were connected with the royal family at Anurādhapura. Throughout the history of Ceylon we find Rohaṇa as the last refuge and sanctuary of freedom. Whenever there was danger at Anurādhapura, either from foreign invasion or from internal conflicts, kings, ministers, monks and others who desired freedom and protection took shelter in the south.

1. In the Rsv. Nāgadīpa, Uttarapassa, Dakkhiṇapassa and Pacchimapassa are referred to. But Pācīnapassa is not mentioned. This shows that even as late as early Christian centuries the Eastern province of Ceylon was not well populated.

2. Parker: *Ancient Ceylon* (1909), pp. 240–241.

3. Mhv. xix, 54.

4. *Ibid.* xix, 62.

5. *Ibid.* xxii, 2–8.

There was another settlement called Candanagāma, hitherto unidentified, where too there were Kṣatriyas. The representatives of these also were among those present at the celebrations of the Mahābodhi at Anurādhapura during Devānampiya-Tissa's reign.[1] One of the first Bo-saplings was planted here.[2]

Mahānāga's journey to Mahāgāma for safety shows that there was communication between Anurādhapura and Mahāgāma. The road between these two places ran through Cetiyagiri (now Mihintalē), Kacchakatittha (Māgantoṭa) or Vaḍḍhamānakatittha (known also by the names Sahassatittha or Dahastoṭa and Assamaṇḍalatittha), Mahiyaṅgaṇa (modern Alutnuvara), Dīghavāpi and Guttahālaka (Buttala). This road also served always as a military route.[3] There is no doubt that there were on this road many places of habitation though much of the road lay across desolate jungle (*antarāmagge agāmakāraññe*).[4]

Anurādhapura and the surrounding districts within a radius of about 60 or 70 miles seem to have been well populated. Paṇḍukābhaya in his military campaign against his uncles in order to subjugate the border districts (*paccantagāma*) is reported to have withdrawn as far south as Dolapabbata (supposed to be the modern Dolagalavela) in the Bintänna district.[5] Thus at least the districts between Anurādhapura and Dolapabbata were well populated.[6]

The districts to the west and north-west of Anurādhapura, the area where some of the earliest villages were established, were also well populated. There were four roads connecting the capital with four famous sea-ports situated along the coast between north and west—namely, Mahātittha (Mātoṭa or Mantai, near Mannar), Jambukolapaṭṭana in the north,[7] Goṇagāmapaṭṭana (on the

1. Mhv. xix, 54.
2. Ibid. xix, 64.
3. Rsv. II, pp. 45 - 48 ; 49 - 51 ; 61 - 63; 84; 114; Mhv. xxv, 6-7 Geiger, Mhv. tr, p. 165, n. 3.
4. Rsv. II, p. 173.
5. Geiger : Mhv. tr. p. 289.
6. Mhv. x, 27ff.
7. Mahinda relates to Devānampiya-Tissa the story of the subduing of the Nāgas by the Buddha at this place. (Mhv. xix, 35.) This shows that Jambukolapaṭṭana was in Nāgadīpa. The story referred to is the Buddha's second visit to Nāgadīpa found in the Mhv. 144-70.

eastern coast ?), and the sea-port at the mouth of the Mahākandara river (probably in the north). The last three have not yet been definitely identified. The localities round these seaports were without doubt inhabited and the four roads ran through many villages, great and small. It is said that when the Bodhi-branch was taken from Jambukolapaṭṭana to Anurādhapura the procession halted at several places, particular mention being made of the village of a brāhmaṇa named Tivakka.[1]

There was another settlement in Kalyāṇī (modern Kälaṇiya). About a century after Devānampiya-Tissa, i.e., in the second century B.C., we know definitely that there was a kingdom at Kälaṇiya. Duṭṭha-Gamaṇī's mother (the daughter of king Tissa of Kalyāṇī), the famous Vihāra-Mahādevi, came from this principality.[2] The Rājāvaliya[3] says that Yaṭāla-Tissa, the son of Mahānāga, Devānampiya-Tissa's brother who fled from Anurādhapura, ruled in Kälaṇiya and built the cetiya there. It is quite reasonable to assume that this principality was among the earliest settlements in Ceylon.

The *Mahāvaṃsa-Ṭīkā* says that the early Aryans who came to this Island opened up new settlements in areas where water was easily available.[4] These were mainly along the principal rivers of Ceylon. Anurādhagāma and other early *gāmas* (villages) such as Upatissa, Ujjeni, Uruvela and Vijita were on the rivers Kadambanadī (Malvatu-oya), Gambhīra-nadī and Kalā-oya.[5] Then there were settlements along the Mahavāli-gaṅga and the Am̆ban-gaṅga, particularly round about Kacchakatittha (Māgantoṭa). In the south settlements were distributed among the four rivers Kum̆bukkan-oya, Mäṇik-gaṅga (Kappakandara), Kirin̆di-oya and Valavē-gaṅga. Another settlement was along the valley of the Kälaṇi-gaṅga. Where there was no river water easily

1. Mhv. xix, 37.
2. *Ibid.* xxii, 12 ff.
3. Rjv. p. 17.
4. MṬ. p. 261: *tasmiṃ tasmiṃ sampanna-salilāsaye bhūmippadese gāme nivesayuṃ.*
5. Mhv. vii, 43 ff.

available, large reservoirs were built in order to make the settlement habitable. Thus there is reference quite early in history to tanks built by Anurādha and Paṇḍukābhaya.[1]

This great concern for an abundance of water in reserve proves the fact that the early settlers (as well as the later Sinhalese) depended on agriculture as their main source of livelihood. The *Mahāvaṃsa*[2] reports that Paṇḍukābhaya's uncle Girikaṇḍa-Siva cultivated an area of 100 *karīsas* (about 800 acres). Harvesting was reckoned a great festival in which everyone took part, high and low alike. Pālī (later known as Suvaṇṇa-Pālī), the beautiful young daughter of Girikaṇḍa-Siva, went herself to the field in a waggon or palanquin (*yāna*) with her retinue, carrying food for her father and the reapers.[3]

As usual with agricultural people, the early settlers supplemented agriculture with cattle-breeding. Particular mention is made of herdsmen (*gopālakā*) living in a village named Dvāramaṇḍala. This village which was near Mihintalē[4] seems to have been composed mainly of herdsmen.[5] One of the most trusted servants in the house of Dīghagāmaṇī and (Ummāda-) Cittā was a herdsman named Citta (*gopālakaṃ Cittaṃ*).[6] There is no doubt that cattle-breeding was one of the most popular occupations in the villages in the early days, as it is even today.

Hunting seems to have been as important as agriculture or cattle-breeding. It was natural that living in villages scattered in the jungle the inhabitants found in hunting a means of livelihood. It was so important that Paṇḍukābhaya is reported to have built a line of huts for huntsmen between the Nicasusāna

1. Mhv. ix, 11 ; x, 85, 88.
2. *Ibid.* x, 29-31.
3. It is interesting in this connection to recall Suddhodana's *vappamaṅgala*, "sowing festival", which was held as a great event. Even the little Prince Siddhārtha was taken to the field for the occasion. Perhaps the events connected with agriculture were held as festivals by Sākyas as by the Greeks and the Romans; Girikaṇḍa-Siva, too, was a Sākya, having family connections with Suddhodana (Mhv. vii, 18 ff.).
4. Mhv. xxiii, 23.
5. *Ibid.* x, 13.
6. *Ibid.* ix, 22.

(Lower cemetery) and Pāsāṇa mountain.[1] Perhaps these huntsmen supplied meat regularly to the city of Anurādhapura. A deity called *Vyādha-deva* (God of Huntsmen) presided over the risky activities of the hunters.[2]

Parker[3] observes that even today Vanniyas, before they set out on a hunting trip, purify themselves on the preceding day by bathing in their village tank, then performing a ceremony to ensure success in their expedition. This may be a continuation of the old *Vyādhadeva* cult of Paṇḍukābhaya's day.

Roast meat seems to have been a special delicacy. Often the meat was roasted over glowing embers on the spot after the chase. Such a preparation was called *aṅgāra-maṃsa*.[4]

Hunting was not only an occupation for the poor, but it was also a popular pastime for the rich. Thus Ummāda-Cittā's brothers, Paṇḍukābhaya's uncles are reported to have gone a-hunting in the Tumbara forest.[5] By the time of Devānampiya-Tissa hunting had become a great, royal sport. Devānampiya-Tissa's famous hunting expeditions to Missaka-Pabbata (later Mihintalē) were conducted as great picnics.[6] The king used to run the distance from the city to the mountain with his men.[7] Food was taken along with the party, and the king was served with food in the evening on the mountain.[8] Hunting was not engaged in for mere killing or food, but for sport (*migavaṃ kīḷituṃ agā*)[9]. Hence Devānampiya-Tissa thought it was

1. Mhv. x, 95—*Āvāsa-pāli vyādhānaṃ tadā āsi nivesitā.*

2. *Ibid.* x, 89.

3. Parker: *Ancient Ceylon*, p. 168 ff.

4. Mhv. x, 14-16. Cf. *Bārānasī-rājāpi aṅgāra-pakkaṃ maṃsaṃ khādissāmīti deviṃ ādāya araññaṃ paviṭṭho* (VbhA. p. 333). Also a hunter of Rohaṇa eats *aṅgāra-pakkamaṃsa* (AA. p. 21).

5. Mhv. x, 2.

6. It is interesting to note here that King Ālavaka used to go hunting once a week (CBhA. p. 211). Asoka's R.E. VIII (Shahbazgarhi) says that the kings in India before him used to hunt for enjoyment. Mhv. v, 154 says Asoka's brother Tissa indulged in the sport.

7. Mhv. xiv, 2.

8. *Ibid.* xiv, 24.

9. *Ibid.* xiv, 1-2.

unseemly to kill an unheeding animal (*pamattaṃ taṃ na yuttaṃ vijjhituṃ*) that was browsing in the thicket. He, therefore, gave the deer a sporting chance to escape by twanging his bowstring.[1]

Arts and crafts were probably not much developed because the early settlers were engaged mainly in working the land and opening new settlements in various parts of the country. It is, however, said that the king of Madhurā sent "a thousand families of the eighteen guilds " during the time of Vijaya.[2] Many other families that came from Madhurā[3] helped to improve the country and to increase the population.

There was a famous place called *kumbhakāra-āvāṭa*[4] ("potter's pit") during the time of Devānampiya-Tissa. Perhaps this was a pit from which potters obtained clay for their industry.

Mention is casually made of a deity called *kammāradeva*[5] at the time of Devānampiya-Tissa. Kammāradeva may mean "God of Smiths" and the sense can be extended to mean "God of Industries" in general. The institution of Kammāradeva shows that the industry of the smith was of great importance at the time. This was so because weapons for hunting and also for self protection were indispensable to the villagers who lived near jungles.

The *Mahāvaṃsa* states that in the tenth year after his coronation Paṇḍukābhaya established village boundaries in the whole of Ceylon.[6] Most of these villages, as far as the chronicles reveal, were called after the names of their chiefs, e.g., Upatissa, Uruvela, Rāma, Vijita, Rohaṇa, Paṇḍula, and so on.

There are references also to districts or *janapadas* that were established as early as the time of Vijaya.[7] Among the districts referred to in the time of Paṇḍukābhaya was one called Girikaṇḍa

1. Mhv. xiv, 3–4.
2. *Ibid.* vii, 57.
3. *Ibid.* vii, 56.
4. MBv. p. 84. The boundary of the Mahāsīmā passed along this pit.
5. *Ibid.* p. 84. The shrine of Kammāradeva was situated to the right of Nīcasusāna.
6. Mhv. x, 103.
7. *Ibid.* vii, 46.

desa. This was given by Paṇḍuvāsudeva to his son Girikaṇḍa-Siva,[1] who drew his revenues therefrom.[2] Paṇḍukābhaya, when he became the king, approved this earlier grant and allowed Girikaṇḍa-Siva, who was his maternal uncle and father-in-law, to enjoy it undisturbed.[3]

In pre-Buddhist Ceylon there do not seem to have been kings in the proper sense of the word, and no central government which co-ordinated the different local or provincial governments. It was not possible to maintain constant and regular contact between Anurādhapura and Mahāgāma or Kalyāṇī, as the means of communication were very limited. Therefore the chiefs of the different localities became automatically the rulers of those provinces. Little or no information is found about the details of this local government. But it is quite justifiable to say that there was a system of Village Committees or Local Bodies which managed the affairs of villages satisfactorily.

S. Paranavitana says that numerous cave inscriptions of the pre-Christian centuries contain the names of private donors to whom the title *parumaka* is prefixed. The Sanskrit *Pramukha* (Pāli *pamukha*), of which *parumaka* is a corruption, was the designation by which the head of a guild or corporation was known in ancient times. Another of the commonest royal titles of early Sinhalese kings, *Gāmaṇī*, is the same as the Vedic *Grāmaṇī*, the headman of a village corporation. On the analogy of these, he conjectures that *Jeṭa* (*Jeṭṭha*) occurring in inscriptions was also of similar origin, and meant the head of a corporation or alderman. On this point Paranavitana observes : "These names are also of interest in giving us an idea of the notions of kingship prevailing in those early days. If the etymology of these words tells us anything, the early kings of Ceylon seem to have been the leaders, though hereditary, of popular assemblies ; and when, later, they assumed the role of absolute monarchs, the old names, now meaningless, continued to be used as personal names. It is also possible that the kings of Ceylon were not of Kṣatriya but Vaiśya

1. Perhaps Siva was his name. Girikaṇḍa was pre-fixed because he was the lord of the place.

2. Mhv. x, 29.

3. *Ibid.* x, 82.

origin, though they professed to belong to the Kṣatriya caste. Some of the most famous among the royal families of India during historic times were of Vaiśya origin."[1]

In pre-Buddhist Ceylon before Devānampiya-Tissa there was no proper coronation of kings. Perhaps the early kings, who were more or less provincial chiefs or *gāmaṇīs*, had no idea of a complete royal coronation. But thay had a simple ceremony which served as a consecration when they assumed authority as rulers. We have a glimpse of this ceremony in the short account of Paṇḍukābhaya's accession to the throne as given in the *Mahāvaṃsa*.[2]

Paṇḍukābhaya ordered the *chatta*, or the State Umbrella of his uncles, to be brought, and he had it purified by washing it in a natural lake (*jātassare*) in Anurādhapura. Then he had it placed over him and solemnized his own coronation with the water of the same lake, while he himself consecrated Suvaṇṇa-Pāli, his spouse, as queen. This passage indicates that the same State Umbrella had been used earlier by his uncles in connection with their coronation, too.

One of the most important elements of the consecration was that the king should have a maiden of the Kṣatriya caste as his queen at the time of the ceremony. After the ministers of Vijaya had established various settlements, they expressed their desire to consecrate him their king, but the prince refused to do so unless and until a maiden of the Kṣatriya caste was consecrated queen at the same time. His ministers had to send ambassadors to Madhurā in South India to secure a royal maiden for the purpose.[3] His successor Paṇḍuvāsudeva, too, did not wish to be consecrated till he obtained a Kṣatriya maiden as queen.[4] These incidents show that a royal maiden was a *sine qua non* for a king's coronation.

The *Mahāvaṃsa-Ṭīkā*[5] definitely states that it was Asoka who introduced the proper form of coronation into Ceylon. Soon after his succession Devānampiya-Tissa sent various valuable

1. E.Z. III, p. 123.
2. Mhv. x, 77-78.
3. *Ibid.* vii, 46-50.
4. *Ibid.* viii, 17.
5. MṬ. p. 306.

gifts to Asoka at Pāṭaliputra. Asoka in his turn was in difficulty in choosing a fitting gift for his royal friend in Ceylon. On inquiry from the Sinhalese ambassadors, he gathered that in Ceylon there was no coronation ceremony as such, except that the king wielded authority with a "new staff".[1] Asoka therefore decided to send his friend all the requisites for the complete coronation. So he sent "a fan, a diadem, a sword, a parasol, shoes, a turban, ear ornaments, chains, a pitcher, yellow sandalwood, a set of garments that had no need of cleansing, a costly napkin, unguent brought by the nāgas, red-coloured earth, water from the lake Anotatta, and also water from the Ganges, a spiral shell winding in auspicious wise, a maiden in the flower of her youth, utensils as golden platters, a costly litter, yellow and emblic myrobalans and precious ambrosial healing herbs, sixty times one hundred waggon loads of mountain-rice brought thither by parrots, nay, all that was needful for consecrating a king."[2]

On their return the Sinhalese ministers consecrated Devānampiya-Tissa for the second time with full ceremony according in the instructions given by Asoka.[3]

In this connection it seems reasonable to believe—though nothing to that effect is recorded in the chronicles or elsewhere—that the honorific term "*Devānampiya*" was also conferred by Asoka as an imperial honour upon the king of Ceylon, whose name was only Tissa. No king in Ceylon before Devānampiya-Tissa seems to have used this prefix.

Devānampiya, "the beloved of the Gods", was a title used by kings in India even before Asoka, and it can be rendered freely into modern English as "His Majesty". Asoka's Rock Edict VIII says : *Atikratam ataram devānampriya vihara yatra nama nikramisu*. B. M. Barua renders this into English : "In the ages gone by, *the kings*[4] went forth on pleasure-trips,"[5] thus taking the

1. *Na aññam abhisekaparihāram nāma atthi, kevalam navayaṭṭhiyā eva kira so rajjam kāreti* (MṬ. p. 306).

2. Geiger's Mhv. tr. xi, 28-32. For a fuller description see MT. p. 304.

3. Mhv. xi, 41. For further details see MṬ. pp. 305-6.

4. The italics are mine.

5. *Inscriptions of Asoka*, II, p. 186.

word '*devānampriya*' to mean simply 'kings'.[1] Mookerji prefers to translate the word as 'Their Sacred Majesties'.[1] This shows clearly that the title '*Devānampiya*' was also used by Asoka's predecessors. The usage seems to have been continued, for Asoka's grandson Dasaratha himself uses the title in the Nagarjuni Hill cave inscription.[2]

The assumption appears justifiable that when Devānāmpriyadarśi (Asoka) sent his gifts along with his spiritual message to Tissa of Ceylon, he also conferred upon his friend the title of *Devānāmpriya* as a mark of imperial recognition.

After Devānampiya-Tissa, many kings of Ceylon such as Saddhā-Tissa (77-59 B.C), Lajji-Tissa (59-50 B.C.), Mahācūlika Maha-Tissa (17-3 B.C.), Kuṭakaṇṇa-Tissa (16-38 A.C.) and Mahānāga (556-559 A.C.) used the title *Devānampiya* as an honorific.[3]

In the king's court were ministers, among whom the *purohita* (royal chaplain) was chief. Vijaya's *purohita* was Upatissa (*Upatisso purohito*) who is reported to have built Upatissa-gāma.[4] The fact that after Vijaya's death the seat of government was moved from Tambapaṇṇi to Upatissa-gāma, and that the government was administered from there till the arrival of Paṇḍuvāsudeva[5] shows that the *purohita* was the most important and influential of all ministers. The *purohita* was usually a brāhmaṇa. Paṇḍukābhaya appointed as his *purohita* Canda,

1. *Asoka*, p. 150.
2. See Mookerji : *op. cit.* pp. 12, 150 n. 4.

As time went on, the title seems to have been regarded as a specific title of Buddhist kings and attempts were perhaps made by non-Buddhists to ridicule it. Thus the *Siddhāntakaumudi* says : *Devānāmpriya iti ca mūrkhe* (*Siddhāntakaumudi*, Bombay, 1929, p. 213). Mookerji thinks that "a title which was complimentary during the Nandas, Mauryas and Suṅgas suffers a deterioration in sense under later Brahmanical prejudice against the most distinguished Buddhist monarch!" But Barua does not endorse this remark. He says : "The derogatory sense came into the head of Bhaṭṭoji Dīkshita and others not out of any sectarian prejudice against Asoka for when they suggested it they had not any tradition before them as to the employment of *Devānampriya* as a royal title associated with the name of any ancient king, particularly Asoka". See Mookerji's *Asoka*, pp. 108-9 and Barua's *Inscriptions of Asoka*, II, pp. 219-220.

3. E.Z. I, pp. 58, 142, 144, 148; *Ibid.* III, pp. 154, 156.
4. Mhv. vii, 44.
5. *Ibid.* viii, 4.

son of his teacher Paṇḍula the brahmin.[1] Devānampiya-Tissa had a brahmin chaplain who accompanied the king's nephew Ariṭṭha on the embassy to Asoka.[2]

Apart from the king who was the head of all the people, society in pre-Buddhist Ceylon can be divided into two sections : religious and secular. There were various religious bodies and they enjoyed royal patronage.[3] The secular section of society was divided, as usual, into four main groups : the kṣatriyas or ruling class, the brāhmaṇas or learned priestly class, farmers and herdsmen who can be included in the vaiśya community, and caṇḍālas or those of low caste who were employed in menial work. Mention is also made of various guilds members of which belonged, most probably, to different sub-castes.[4]

The brāhmaṇas were wealthy and learned, and they formed the most influential and respected community in the villages. They were also teachers and were consulted by the people. The *Mahāvaṃsa* mentions that the brāhmaṇas well-versed in *mantras* declared that Cittā's son would slay all his uncles for the sake of the kingdom.[5] Paṇḍukābhaya was entrusted by his mother to a brāhmaṇa named Paṇḍula who was wealthy and well-versed in the *Vedas* (*bhogavā vedapārago*). It was this brāhmaṇa who trained Paṇḍukābhaya in the arts and sciences necessary for a king, and ultimately gave him wealth sufficient to raise an army to fight his enemies.[6] The procession that brought the branch of the Bo-tree from Jambukolapaṭṭana is reported to have stopped, on its way to Anurādhapura, at the entrance to the village of the brāhmaṇa Tivakka (*Tivakkassa brāhmaṇassa gāmadvāre*).[7]

This halt is particularly referred to by name, whereas other halting places are just mentioned as "several other places",

1. Mhv. x, 79.
2. *Ibid.* xi, 20.
3. A discussion of this will be found in the next chapter.
4. The duties of these castes were not divided into water-tight compartments. For example, Paṇḍukābhaya's uncle, Girikaṇḍa-Siva, who was a ksatriya, is reported to have cultivated a hundered *karīsas*.
5. Mhv. ix, 2.
6. *Ibid.* x, 19-26.
7. *Ibid.* xix, 37.

without specific names (*thānesu tesu tesu ca*). And the brāhmaṇa Tivakka is specially mentioned among the distinguished visitors who attended the Bodhi festival at Anurādhapura.[1] One of eight Bo-saplings was also planted in his village.[2] Reference has already been made earlier in this chapter to the other castes and the main particulars available about them, such as the occupations.

There were two well-known festivals in pre-Buddhist Ceylon, both of which were held on the full moon day of the month of *Jeṭṭha* (May-June).[3] One of these was a water-festival (*salilakīḷitaṃ*). This was chiefly meant for the people. A water-festival in the month of *Jeṭṭha* is referred to in the *Rasavāhinī*[4] as having been held even during the time of Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī who himself took part in it. The month of *Jeṭṭha* is in the hot season and the choice of date must therefore have been welcome. The other festival was a hunt (*migavaṃ*) in which too the king joined as was discussed above. That festivals were held in connection with agricultural activities has already been mentioned.

There is no reference to any literary activities in pre-Buddhist Ceylon, nor have any inscriptions before the third century B.C. been discovered so far. But education was not neglected, at least among the ruling classes and among brahmins. Mention is made of the education of Paṇḍukābhaya under the brāhman Paṇḍula who lived in a village known after his name to the south of the city. He is reported to have taught the arts (*sippa*) to his son Canda and Paṇḍukābhaya.[5] No mention is made of other pupils and we are left in doubt as to whether he was the head of a school.

The early Āryans who settled in Laṅkā were not altogether cut off from their kinsmen in India. Ceylon was so closely and intimately connected with India that every great change that took place in the main continent — whether political, social,

1. Mhv. xix, 54.
2. *Ibid.* xix, 61.
3. *Ibid.* xiv, 1 ; MṬ. p. 329
4. Rsv. II, p. 73.
5. Mhv. x, 20-23.

economic or religious—influenced considerably the life of the people of Ceylon. The narrow stretch of water between Talaimannar and Dhanuskodi was no hindrance to regular communication between the two countries, and India with a motherly affection was always ready to come to Ceylon's help, though in later times greedy rulers from South India plundered the Island from time to time.

Cordial relations between the two countries existed from the earliest times. Vijaya (483-445 B.C.) and his men obtained as their wives maidens from Madhurā in the Paṇḍya country in south India.[1] The king of Madhurā is reported to have sent to his son-in-law a thousand families of eighteen guilds in addition to elephants, horses waggons and craftsmen.[2] Vijaya continued to maintain cordiality by sending such gifts as valuable pearls to his father-in-law.[3] His nephew Paṇḍuvāsudeva who succeeded him married a Sākyan princess from north India.[4] Later on, her brothers came to Ceylon and established settlements in various parts of the Island.[5] Paṇḍukābhaya, evidently the greatest king of pre-Buddhist Ceylon, was the grandson of Dīghāyu, one of the six Sākya princes who came from north India.[6] It was through Paṇḍukābhaya that the Sinhalese kings traced their descent to the Sākya clan to which the Buddha belonged.[7]

The relations between ancient India and Ceylon reached their highest point during the time of Devānampiya-Tissa. Asoka's fame as a great and powerful emperor spread far and wide from north to south and from east to west. The emperor extended his good works even to the dominions of other kings. We saw in the last chapter that Asoka's activities in social welfare and medical

1. Mhv. vii, 48–58; 69–72.
2. *Ibid.* vii, 56–57.
3. *Ibid.* vii, 73.
4. *Ibid.* viii, 18–27.
5. *Ibid.* ix, 6-11.
6. *Ibid.* ix, 13–27.
7. A prince named Lāmāṇi Mihind who ruled Rohaṇa traced his descent to Paṇḍukābhaya (EZ. III, p. 222). Mahinda IV traced his descent to Paṇḍukābhaya and to Suddhodana, thereby claiming his connection with the Sākya race (EZ. III, p. 227).

services included Ceylon,[1] and that his *Dharma-vijaya* was successful in this Island. This means that he won the hearts of the people of Ceylon, not through the force of arms, but through his cultural, social and religious activities. Further the emperor says that even the countries to which his envoys did not go followed his injunctions.

We have already spoken of the friendly relations that existed between Devānampiya-Tissa and Asoka and the exchange of courtesies between them. This cordiality on the part of the Sinhalese ruler was evidently due to the benefits which his country received from Asoka, and the admiration in which Asoka's achievements were held. The culmination of these exchanges was reached when Asoka, in acknowledging the valuable presents sent from Ceylon, made arrangements for Devānampiya-Tissa's coronation and sent a message requesting the King of Laṅkā to become a Buddhist, even as himself became a follower of the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha.[2]

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1. On the identification of Tambapaṇṇī with Ceylon see above p. 10, n. 1.

2. Mhv. xi, 34-35 ; Dpv. xii, 5-7. But another account of Asoka in the Dpv. does not say that he asked Devānampiya-Tissa to accept Buddhism. It simply says that Asoka informed Devānampiya-Tissa that he (Asoka) worshipped the Buddha, Dhamma nad Saṅgha. (Dpv. xi, 35-36.) This can be taken as an indirect suggestion.

There is a story in the *Suttanipāta-Aṭṭhakathā* which has striking similarities with the *Mahāvaṃsa* story. King Kaṭṭhavāhana of the north and the king of Benares were great friends who had never met, as was the case with Asoka and Tissa. Once Kaṭṭhavāhana sent his friend in Benares some priceless robes. The king of Benares, finding it difficult to choose a gift more valuable, sent a message of truth. At that time lived the Buddha Kassapa. The king of Benares sent a message to Kaṭṭhavāhana saying that the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha had appeared in the world. When Kaṭṭhavāhana received this message he desired to go and see the Buddha, but his ministers and his nephew stopped him, and went themselves to see the Buddha. (Devānampiya-Tissa's nephew also went to Pāṭaliputra.) By the time they went to Benares, Kassapa Buddha had died, and they weie disappointed. But the bhikkhus advised them to take refuge in the Triple Gem, etc. Except the king's nephew all the rest became monks. The nephew took *paribhogadhātu*, the Buddha's *dhammakaraka* and a bhikkhu well versed in the Dhamma and Vinaya and delivered the message. King Kaṭṭhavāhana visited the thera, heard the Dhamma, built a vihāra, erected a cetiya, planted a Bodhi tree, took refuge in the Triple Gem, observed the Five and the Eight Precepts, gave alms, and ultimately wa born in the deva-world. (SnA. p. 469 ff.)

The king of Ceylon furthermore in accordance with the request of his imperial friend in India, held a second coronation ceremony. This act was perhaps a gesture both of intimate friendship as well as an admission of Asoka's supremacy and influence even over Ceylon. The friendship thus begun between the two countries ultimately led Asoka to send his own son Mahinda and his daughter Saṅghamittā as missionaries to establish Buddhism in Ceylon.[1]

1. The frequency of intercourse between the two countries allows us reasonably to infer that India and Ceylon had a sea-going fleet as early as the third century B.C. See also Mookerji : *op. cit.* p. 36.

3.

PRE-BUDDHIST CEYLON II: RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS

Before Buddhism came to Ceylon in the third century B.C.* there was evidently no national or state religion systematically organized in the Island. To take the view of Hiuen Tsiang, "the kingdom of Sinhala formerly was addicted to immoral religious worship".[1] We can get a glimpse of this "immoral religious worship"—primitive animistic cults—if we examine the chronicles carefully.

There are references to supernatural beings, *yakṣas* and *yakṣinīs* in the Vijaya legend, but no mention is made of any form of worship or cult till we enter the period of Paṇḍukābhaya in the fourth century B.C. From the account of Paṇḍukābhaya's manifold activities in the chronicles we can get some idea of the forms of worship that were prevalent at the time. Paṇḍukābhaya seems to have followed the ancient custon of the kings of India and Ceylon and patronized with equal liberality and impartiality cults and religions in vogue in his day. But we are at a loss to discover what his own particular form of faith was. Perhaps he had no particular inclination towards any, and found one form of belief as good as another.

The worship of the yakṣas seems to have been a popular and prevalent cult. Immediately after Paṇḍukābhaya's accession he is reported to have settled the Yakṣa Kāḷavela on the east side

*There is a valuable paper on *Pre-Buddhist Religious Beliefs in Ceylon* by S. Paranavitana in JRAS. (CB), Vol. XXXI, No. 82, pp. 302–327, to which references are made in this chapter.

1. Hiuen Tsiang: Bk. XI, p. 246. (But the author did not come to Ceylon.)

of the city,[1] and Yakṣa Cittarāja at the lower end of the Abhaya tank.[2] Henry Parker thinks that these two yakṣas were two prominent chiefs of the Väddās whose authority and influence "the politic king found it advisable to recognise", and he suggests that "his political sagacity in this respect doubtless saved the country from many years of bloodshed and insecurity, and converted the Väddās into peaceable inhabitants devoted to his interests".[3] This is an example of the rationalizing tendency to explain away the yakṣas referred to in the chronicles as aborigines who inhabited the Island before the Āryans invaded Ceylon.

But there is no reason to fight shy of the facts. The *Mahāvaṃsa* definitely says that Citta and Kāḷavela, the two trusted servants of Ummāda-Cittā, were murdered by the princes because thay would not agree with the treacherous plot of her brothers, and were reborn as yakṣas and that both of them kept guard over the child Paṇḍukābhaya in the mother's womb.[4] It was the same two yakṣas, Citta and Kāḷavela, who saved the babe Paṇḍukābhaya from the fatal hands of his uncles by showing them a wild boar to divert their attention and thereby giving a chance for the servant-maid to run away with the basket in which the baby was being carried.[5]

This shows that the yakṣas Cittaraja and Kāḷavela were neither two chief of the aborigines or Väddās, nor any beings

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1. Kāḷavela's shrine continued, at least, up to the fourth century A.C. King Mahāsena is said to have built a *thūpa* on this spot —*Kālavelakayakkhassa ṭhāne thūpañ ca kārayi*. (Mhv. xxxvii, 44.)
Cetiyas like Udena, Gotamaka, Sattamba, Bahuputta, Sārandada and Cāpāla in Vesāli (D. II, p. 72), Ānanda Cetiya in Bhogagāma (D. II, p. 77) and Aggālava Cetiya in Ālavi (SnA. p. 301) were shrines originally dedicated to various yakṣas after whose names the cetiyas were called. But later, during the time of the Buddha, vihāras were built for the Master on the spots of these cetiyas, and were used to be called after the original names (AA. pp. 550, 701, 784 ; SnA. p. 301). The Buddha himself refers to *cetiyas* in general that were scattered throughout the land. (M. I, p. 21; Dhp. xiv, 10.) *Cetiyas* were usually regarded as places where deities and yakṣas resided, and people made offerings at these shirnes in order to get help in their difficulties.

2. Mhv. x, 84.

3. *Ancient Ceylon*, p. 26.

4. Mhv. ix, 22–23.

5. *Ibid.* x, 1–5.

actually known to Paṇḍukābhaya, but that they were spirits of the dead existing in the imagination of the people, like the yakṣas and the spirits living even today in the imagination of the superstitious.

Here it is necessary to discuss, along with the yakṣa cult, the ancestor worship or the veneration of the spirits of the dead which existed in pre-Buddhist Ceylon in common with other primitive cultures.[1] Paṇḍukabhaya and the people of his day seem to have had the notion that faithful and devoted persons after their death were reborn as yakṣas and continued to watch over the interests of their former friends and patrons. Citta and Kāḷavela were two such. In the same way Citta, the faithful servant-maid of Paṇḍukābhaya's family, was also reborn as a yakṣiṇī. Paṇḍukābhaya is reported to have lodged this yakṣiṇī at the south gate of the city out of gratitude to her for having been helpful to him in her previous birth.[2]

These instances show that there was a belief that the dead were sometimes reborn as yakṣas and yakṣiṇīs and, that they came to the help of their dear ones in moments of need. This belief was current in ancient India before, and even after, the Buddha.[3] Mahinda is reported to have preached on the second day of his arrival in Ceylon the *Petavatthu* and the *Vimānavatthu.*

1 See ERE.: Ancestor Worship and Cult of the Dead.

2. Mhv. x, 85.

The term *yakṣa* denotes superhuman beings worthy of respect, somewhat lower than the *devas*. In early Pāli literature the term is applied to the Buddha (M. II, p. 39) as well as to Sakka, the king of devas (M. I, p. 256; D. II, p. 169) and also to other devas (D. II, 165). The pious king Bimbisāra was born as the Yakkha Janavasabha (D. II, p. 123 ff.). It is possible that the term *yakṣa* was applied, by an extension of meaning, also to some pre-Buddhistic tribe of human beings, aboriginal to Ceylon. These humans would then be regarded as the descendants of people who, after their death, were reborn as non-human *yakṣas*. The latter were worshipped and, maybe, sacrifices were also offered to them. The worshippers too thus came to be called *yakṣas* by a transference of the name to the worshipper from the worshipped. As time went on (it may be conjectured) not only the name, but some of their supernatural powers were also transferred. Compare with this the fact that the word *dāsa* or *dasyu* in the *Ṛgveda* was applied to non-Aryan aboriginal inhabitants as well as to evil demons, besides also to rākṣasas (HIL. I, p. 78). See also O. H. de A. Wijesekera : *The Philosophical Import of Vedic Yakṣa and Pāli Yakkha* in UCR. Vol. I, No. 2 (November, 1943), pp. 24–33.

3. See Jātakas 512, 544, 545.

two Buddhist texts dealing with the spirits of the dead.[1] This, perhaps, indicates that Mahinda, at the very beginning of his missionary activities here, thought of winning the hearts of the people by appealing to their sentiments through a sermon which they could easily understand and appreciate.

Ancestor worship is "one of the great branches of the religion of mankind. Its principles are not difficult to understand, for they plainly keep up the social relations of the living world. The dead ancestor, now passed into a deity, simply goes on protecting his own family and receiving suit and service from them as of old; the dead chief still watches over his own tribe, still holds his authority by helping friends and harming enemies, still rewards the right and sharply punishes the wrong."[2] This belief has persisted in Ceylon down to modern times in the form of the Baṇḍāra-cult, the veneration of deceased chiefs and prominent ancestors, which is practised in some parts of the island even today. The worship of Minnēriya-Deyyo, the spirit of King Mahasena (4th century A.C.) who built the gigantic tank at Minneriya, can be cited as an example. Villagers believe that some of the dead are reborn as *gevala-yakās* (spirits living in the houses), and they may be benevolent or malevolent according to their disposition. The word *yakā* (Sinhalese form of *yakkha* or *yakṣa*) even among Väddās is applied to all male deities, whether beneficent or otherwise.[3] It is well-known that even today some villagers build tiny huts and make offerings there to the spirits of the dead.

Thus, it seems correct to assume that Cittarāja and Kāḷavela were not chiefs of the aborigines or Väddās, but that Paṇḍukābhaya in venerating the spirits of the dead only followed a current popular belief.

As we have seen above, Paṇḍukābhaya provided settlements for the Yakṣas Kāḷavela and Cittarāja and also the Yakṣinī (Cittā) who was his mother's servant in her previous birth. In addition to these three he also housed the Yakkhinī Valavāmukhī

1. Mhv. xiv, 58 ; Smp. (SHB.), p. 47.
2. ERE. Vol. I, p. 425.
3. Parker : *op. cit.* p. 134.

within the royal precincts and made yearly sacrificial offerings to them and to other yakṣas.[1] Valavāmukhī was the title of a yakṣinī named Cetiyā, who wandered about in the form of a mare. Paṇḍukābhaya captured her and subbued her. She was greatly helpful to him in his war against his uncles.[2] That was why he housed her within the royal precincts with special regard and respect.[3]

Thus the *Mahāvaṃsa* statement that Paṇḍukābhaya settled yakṣas and yakṣinīs in different places means only that he built shrines or cetiyas for yakṣas and yakṣinīs who, according to his belief, were benevolent and helpful—just as people today build devālayas or shrines and make offerings to various deities.

The *Mahāvaṃsa*[4] says that "on festival days Paṇḍukābhaya sat with Cittarāja beside him on an equal seat, and having gods and men to dance before him the king took his pleasure in joyous and merry wise." Further, the chronicle[5] says that with Kāḷavela and Cittarāja who were visible (*Kāḷavela-Cittehi dissamānehi*) the king conjointly enjoyed prosperity, having yakṣas and bhūtas as his friends (*Yakkha-bhūta-sahāyavā*).

From these poetically expressed statements, we need not understand that the yakṣas appeared in visible forms, and that Paṇḍukābhaya sat with them in public. Parker thinks that the words 'Kālavela and Citta who were visible' exhibit "the hand of the reverend historian of the fifth century in this little parenthesis'".[6] Another possible explanation is that perhaps the images of these yakṣas were placed on equal seats by the side of Paṇḍukabhaya to emphasize his majesty and greatness. This act of Paṇḍukābhaya's can easily be appreciated if we take into

1. Mhv. x, 86.
2. *Ibid.* x, 53 ff.
3. It is interesting to compare Cittarāja of the Kurudhamma Jātaka (No. 276) with Cittarāja in the Mhv. The Yakkha Cittarāja was the object of a popular cult in ancient India (Jātaka No. 276, J. II, pp. 365–381), and also cf. the Yakkhinī Assamukhī of the Padamānava Jātaka (No. 432) with Valavāmukhī of the Mhv. (J. IV, p. 15ff.). It is equally interesting to compare this Jātaka with the Sīhabāhu story of the Mhv. (See also G. C. Mendis: "The Vijaya Legend," *Paranavitana Felicitation Volume*, p. 263 ff.)
4. Mhv. x, 87, 88.
5. *Ibid.* x, 104.
6. *Ancient Ceylon* p. 26 n. 1.

consideration the primitive idea of what is known as 'imitative magic'. "The notion underlying the practices of this kind, which form a wide class, is that, if we can make the likeness obey our will, the original must follow suit". It is a kind of "belief that power over the image gave one power over the thing".[1] The statement that he had yakṣas and bhūtas as his friends and that he had gods and men to dance before him is, in this connection, not surprising. Paṇḍukābhaya was obviously the greatest and ablest king of pre-Buddhist Ceylon. His life was therefore surrounded with super-human legends as was the case with almost all the great and powerful men of the past. The Buddha and his arahant disciples met devas, yakṣas and bhūtas quite often ; Vijaya conquered yakṣas ; Asoka had yakṣas and nāgas as servants at his beck and call ; Siri Saṅghabodhi subdued a dangerous yakṣa ; Mahāsena challenged the gods ; even Śrī Rāhula of Toṭagamuva, great poet and scholar of the fifteenth century A.C., is popularly believed to have had yakṣas under his control.[2]

Paṇḍukābhaya might even have sincerely believed that he had the help of supernatural agents, and therefore built several shrines and made provisions for them in grateful recognition of their assistance ; and, further, he might have thought it politic to impress the people with his majesty and greatness by showing them that he had the strength of the yakṣas to support him.

Besides these yakṣas, there were several others of less importance. The *Mahāvaṃsa-Ṭīkā*[3], borrowing from the *Uttaravihāraṭṭhakathā*, mentions that there was a yakṣa named Jutindara, and that he was the husband of Cetiyā or Valavāmukhī, and that he was killed in battle in the city of Sirīsavatthu. This yakṣa lived on the Dhumarakkha mountain (Udumbarapabbata, modern Dimbulāgala) in the eastern part of the Island. Nothing more is known of the husband of Valavāmukka-yakkhinī who played such an important part in the story of Paṇḍukābhaya.

1. See R. R. Marrett : *Man in the Making*, Chs. II and III.

2. Alexander the Great is reported to have believed at one stage of his life that he was the son not of Philip of Macedon, but of a god, and that he possessed superhuman powers.

3. MṬ. p. 289.

Paṇḍukābhaya is also reported as having built a house for the Yakṣa Maheja.[1] There are no further details available about this deity. But his shrine seems to have continued down to the time of Devānampiya-Tissa. For, it is recorded that the elephant bearing the sacred relics that were to be enshrined in Thūpārāma proceeded as far as the shrine of Yakṣa Maheja.[2] There is no mention of this shrine later. Perhaps it was lost among the Buddhist buildings that arose around Thūpārāma.

Mention is made of a deity called Kammāra-deva, "God of Blacksmiths or Industries", during the time of Devānampiya-Tissa.[3] This deity has already been discussed in the previous chapter. Another deity known as Pura-deva is mentioned during the time of Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī.[4] This "god presiding over the city", though referred to for the first time in the second century B.C., might have been in existence even earlier. There was another yakṣa named Jayasena residing on Ariṭṭha-pabbata (Riṭi-gala) whom Gotha-imbara, one of Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī's generals, defeated in a duel.[5] There was a female deity named Pacchima-rājinī "Western Queen" whom Paṇḍukābhaya installed near the western gate of the city.[6] We know nothing about the functions of this deity.[7]

It is only natural to expect that Mahinda evercame and converted some superhuman beings in Ceylon. Two of his colleagues who went as missionaries to other parts of the world are reported to have won over yakṣas and nāgas to the Faith. Majjhantika Thera who went to Kasmīra subdued nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas and kumbhaṇḍas.[8] Soṇa who went to Suvaṇṇabhmi converted a rākṣasī.[9] Although Mahinda came to a country

1. Mhv. x, 90.
2. *Ibid.* xvii, 30 ; MṬ. p. 378.
3. MBv. p. 84.
4. Mhv. xxv, 87.
5. Rsv. II, p. 89.
6. Mhv. x, 89.
7. Paranavitana thinks that this Western Queen was the Queen of the Western women mentioned by Hiuen Tsiang. (JRAS. CB. Vol. XXXI, No. 82, p. 309.)
8. Mhv. xv, 11–28 ; Smp. (SHB), p. 37.
9. Mhv. xv, 44–45 ; Smp. (SHB), p. 39.

infested with yakṣas and nāgas, he is not reported to have converted any of these. But at least the Buddhists of the tenth century A.C. seem to have believed that Mahinda converted to Buddhism a *rakus* (rakkhasa, rākṣasa) who dwelt in the Tissa tank. This 'rakus' after his conversion is said to have been of service to Buddhism and to the world, but nothing is known of his life.[1]

The god Sumana of Samantakūṭa (Adam's Peak) is also a pre-Buddhist deity. He was, perhaps, originally a yakṣa, and later on was elevated to the position of a deva after his conversion to Buddhism by the Buddha during the latter's first visit to Ceylon. It is worth noting that there is a yakṣa named Sumana in the *Āṭānāṭiya-sutta*. Still later, the god Sumana was sought to be identified with the Mahāyāna Bodhisattva Samantabhadra.[2]

Even after the Sinhalese were converted to Buddhism they desired to continue to venerate their friendly deities. But being Buddhists, they did not like to worship a non-Buddhist deity. They, therefore, converted these deities to Buddhism and elevated them to a higher plane as in the case of Sumana. Such is the case also with most of the other local gods. There may have been some minor deities who were not Buddhist, but almost all the important deities who survived the introduction of Buddhism became Buddhist sooner or later.[3]

Besides these Yakṣa-cults, references are found in the chronicles indicating the existence in pre-Buddhist Ceylon of tree-worship. Tree-worship as a popular cult is mentioned in early Buddhist texts, and some trees were termed *cetiyas*.[4] Even in later sculptures certain trees were included in the category of

1. E.Z. I, p. 33 ff.; JRAS (CB), Vol. XXXI, No. 82, p. 305.

2. CJSc. Section G. Vol. II, Pt. I, p. 64. (See also S. Paranavitana: *The God of Adam's Peak*, an Artibus Asiae Supplementum.)

3. It is surprising that there is no mention of a nāga-cult among the various beliefs of pre-Buddhist Ceylon. But the unusually respectful treatment of the cobra among the Sinhalese villagers even today indicates the place that serpents had occupied among the cults in ancient Ceylon. The villagers attribute to the cobra intelligence, understanding and a sense of justice and fairness not accorded to other serpents.

4. M. I, p. 21; Dhp. xiv, 10.

cetiyas[1]. In the Indus civilization of Mohenjodaro and Harappa tree-worship features prominently. It is believed that the Bo-tree was worshipped in Mohenjodaro, too.[2]

In pre-Buddhist Ceylon we have definite evidence of two trees which were considered sacred. One of them is the banyan tree, which even today is generally regarded as sacred and the abode of deities. Paṇḍukābhaya is reported to have settled Vaiśravaṇa the yakṣa king in a banyan tree near the western gate of the city.[3] The other sacred tree was the palmyrah. Paṇḍukābhaya settles Vyādha-deva, "god of huntsmen" in a palmyrah tree near the western gate of the city.[4] Parker thinks that this god of hunters is identical with the Hill God of the aborigines of South India, and that the knowledge of him was brought to Ceylon by the first comers in very early times.[5] But except for this one isolated example there is no proper evidence to show that the palmyrah palm was included in the category of sacred trees. Nor is it regarded as a sacred tree among the villagers today.[6]

1. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy : *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, p. 47.

2. Sir John Marshall : *Mohenjo-daro and the Indus Civilization*, Vol. I, p. 63 ff.

3. Mhv. x, 89.

4. *Vyādhadevassa tālakaṃ*. Mhv. x, 89. Geiger reads *vyādhidevassa*. So does Malalasekara. But *Vyādhadeva*, which is adopted in the Mhv. ed. of Sumangala and Batuwantudave, seems to be more reasonable when we consider the fact that hunting was an important occupation at the time and that Paṇḍukābhaya had built a line of huts for hunters—*āvāsapāli vyādhānaṃ* (Mhv. x, 95).

5. *Ancient Ceylon*, p. 177.

6. Paranavitana thinks that the palmyra palm seems to have been considered sacred in ancient India during the time of the Buddha. In support of this he quotes the instance when the Chabbaggiyas were prohibited from cutting down young palmyra palms for the purpose of using their leaves for sandals. Paranavitana says that people regarded the palmyra palm as having *ekindriyaṃ* (JRAS. CB., Vol. XXXI, No. 82, p. 318). But this does not prove that any particular sanctity was attached to the palmyra tree, because not only the palmyra but every plant including grass, had according to the popular belief in ancient India, *ekindriyaṃ jīvaṃ*, "life with -one-sense-faculty". At Aggālava Cetiya in Alavī bhikkhus cut down trees in order to make houses. (The names of the trees are not given.) The expression used in this case is the same : *ekindriyaṃ samaṇā sakyaputtiyā jīvaṃ viheṭhessanti....jīvasaññino hi.... manussā rukkhasmiṃ* (Pācit. p. 39). Even common grass was regarded as having *ekindriyaṃ jīvaṃ* "one-sense-life."

Apart from the cults discussed above there were other religions. Paranavitana says that the earliest inscriptions bear testimony to the presence of brāhmaṇas in Ceylon just after the introduction of Buddhism, and he concludes that they must therefore have lived in pre-Buddhist Ceylon, too.[1] In the previous chapter we discussed the role of brāhmaṇas in society. There were several brāhmaṇic religious institutions in Anurādhapura at the time.

The *Mahābodhivaṃsa* says that a *devageha* (god-house) belonging to a brāhmaṇa named Diyavāsa was kept to the left in marking the boundaries of the Mahāsīmā during the time of Devānampiya-Tissa.[2] This was, most probably, a devālaya or temple of Brahmaṇic faith. Among Paṇḍukābhaya's buildings in Anurādhapura is included a dwelling place for brāhmaṇas (*brāhmaṇa-vatthuṃ*),[3] probably an ārāma or monastery for brāhmaṇas. Paṇḍukābhaya is reported to have also put up a building called *sotthisāla*.[4] The *Mahāvaṃsa-Ṭīkā* gives two interpretations to the term: One is that it means a hall where brāhmaṇas utter *sotthivacana*. The other is that it is a hospital.[5] If we accept the first interpretation, then it would be a hall where brahmaṇas recited their *svastivacana* in Anurādhapura, as early as the fourth century B.C.

Evidence is also available for the existence of the nigaṇṭhas in pre-Buddhist Ceylon. The word *nigaṇṭha*, in early Pāli literature, denoted a Jaina ; and Mahāvīra, the founder of Jainism, was called Nigaṇṭho Nātaputto.[6] Even in the Pāli

1. JRAS. (CB), Vol. XXXI. No. 82, p. 322.
2. Mbv. p. 85.
3. Mhv. x, 102.
4. *Ibid.* x, 102.
5. MṬ. p. 296—*Sotthisāla nāma brāhmaṇānaṃ sotthivacanuccāraṇasālā gilānasālā vā*. *Svasti-vacana* is a religious rite preparatory to a sacrifice or any solemn observance (performed by scattering boiled rice on the ground and invoking blessings by the repetition of certain *mantras*; also applied to the fee or complimentary present of flowers, sweetmeats etc., offered to brāhmans on such occasions). See Monier Willians, *Skt.-Eng. Dict.* s.v. *Svasti*.
6. *e.g.*, M. II, p. 27, *Upāli-sutta*.

commentaries and chronicles of the fifth century the word *nigaṇṭha* is used to mean a Jaina.[1]

There were three well-known nigaṇṭhas in Anurādhapura at the time of Paṇḍukābhaya, namely, Jotiya, Giri and Kumbhaṇḍa. Paṇḍukābhaya built a house for the Nigaṇṭha Jotiya eastward of the Lower Cemetery. The Nigaṇṭha named Giri also lived in the same locality. Paṇḍukābhaya is reported to have erected a *devakula* (chapel) for Kumbhaṇḍa, and it was known after the name of that nigaṇṭha.[2] The monasteries (*assamapadāni*) of these three nigaṇṭhas were in existence even during the time of Devānampiya-Tissa, and they were included within the boundaries of the Mahāsīmā.[3] Perhaps Giri's monastery was the most important and prosperous of the three. The *Mahāvaṃsa-Ṭīkā* says that Khallāṭanāga's three nephews named Tissa, Abhaya and Uttara who plotted against the king, jumped into the fire at this monastery and committed suicide.[4] We know that the next king Vaṭṭagāmaṇī-Abhaya demolished this monastery and built Abhayagiri on the spot. We hear no more of the monasteries of nigaṇṭhas in later times, and there are no archaeological remains found to indicate the sites of any Jaina monasteries in Anurādhapura or elsewhere in Ceylon.[5] The Jaina monasteries were probably converted to Buddhist vihāras, just as in the case of Giri's monastery in Anurādhapura or the old cetiyas of yakṣas in ancient India.[6]

There is reason to believe that Śaivism also existed in Ceylon at the time. Thus the *Mahāvaṃsa* records that Paṇḍukābhaya built a *sivikā-sālā*.[7] The *Ṭīkā* offers two interpretations of this

1. It is only in later Pāli literature that the term *nigaṇṭha* denotes any non-Buddhist heretic, *e.g.*, in the Dāṭhā. of the 12th century the meaning of the term is not definite. Evidently it means a Vaiṣṇava (vv. 209, 210). But according to v. 155 the nigaṇṭhas believed in Śiva and Brahma as well.

2. Mhv. x, 97–99.

3. MBv. p. 84.

4. MṬ. p. 612 says that the pyre was made on the spot where Abhayagiri Dāgäba stands now.

5. JRAS. (CB), Vol. XXXI, No. 82, p. 325.

6. For the possibility of Jainas coming to Ceylon very early see also JRAS. (CB), Vol. XXXI, No. 82, p. 324, and Lewis Rice, *Mysore and Coorg*, p. 3 ff.

7. Mhv. x, 102.

term as in the case of *sotthisālā*. The first is that it was a hall where the *Śivaliṅga*, the phallus of Śiva, was established, and the other is that it was a lying -in-home.[1] Paranavitana thinks that as the terms *sivikā* and *sotthi-sālā* are mentioned in company with other buildings of a religious nature, the first explanation is more plausible.[2] If that is so, we have here an example of phallic worship in ancient Ceylon. The *Mahāvaṃsa-Ṭīkā* says that Mahāsena (334-362 A.C.) destroyed Śivaliṅgas everywhere in the Island,[3] which shows that by the fourth century A.C. phallic worship was probably widespread.[4]

Paribbājakas and Ājīvikas, Pāsaṇḍas and Pabbajitas and many other ascetics, known as Samaṇas, seem to have been found in fair numbers in the Island. The *Mahāvaṃsa* says that Paṇḍukābhaya built a monastery for Paribbājakas and a house for Ājīvikas.[5] Various Pāsaṇḍas and Samaṇas lived in the area where the Nigaṇṭhas Giri and Jotiya resided.[6] From the *Mahābodhivaṃsa* we learn that at the time of Devānampiya-Tissa there was a monastery (*ārāma*) for many Paribbājakas and that it was to the left of the Mahāsīmā.[7] That the Paribbājakas and Pabbajitas were numerous and popular in pre-Buddhist Ceylon can be seen from certain references to them in the chronicles : The god Uppalavaṇṇa came to Ceylon in the guise of a Paribbājaka to help Vijaya and his followers.[8] Paṇḍuvāsudeva also came here in the guise of a Paribbājaka.[9] Bhaddakaccānā and her thirty-

1. *Sivikāsālā nāma sivaliṅga-patiṭṭhāpita sālāṭ vijāyanagharaṃ vā.* MṬ. p. 296.
2. JRAS. (CB), Vol. XXXI, No. 82, p. 326.
3. MṬ. p. 685—*sabbattha Laṅkādīpamhi kudiṭṭhikānam ālayaṃ viddaṃsetvā sivaliṅgādayo nāsetvā.*
4. Incidentally, the name of one of Paṇḍukābhaya's uncles was Girikaṇḍa-Siva, that is, Siva of Girikaṇḍa District. (Mhv. x, 29.) Might this be taken as indirect evidence to indicate the existence of Śaivism in Ceylon at the time?
5. Mhv. x, 101–102.
6. *Ibid.* x, 98.
7. MBv. pp. 84–85.
8. Mhv. vii, 6.
9. *Ibid.* viii, 11.

two women arrived in this Island robed like nuns (*pabbajitākārā*).[1] These would show that Pabbajitas and Paribbājakas were known in the Island, and that they were popular and enjoyed security.

Mention is made also of a religious sect called Tāpasa. Paṇḍukābhaya is said to have built a monastery (*assama*) for these ascetics beyond the line of huts for huntsmen, towards the north.[2] What is meant by the term *tāpasa* is not quite clear. Besides these various religious sects, it is said that five hundred families of heretical beliefs (*micchādiṭṭhikula*) also lived towards the east of the line of huntsmen.[3] What was heretical in the eyes of the people of Paṇḍukābhaya's day in Ceylon is an intriguing mystery to us to-day.

There was another cult in pre-Buddhist ceylon, which perhaps may not be included directly in the category of religious beliefs, namely, the cult of astrology. The adoption of the names of constellations for persons is a practice which goes back to the Vedic period. We find names like Rohaṇa and Anurādha in early Ceylon, too. Public festivals, called *kṣaṇakrīḍā* after certain *nakṣatras* (constellations), were also held. The *Mahāvaṃsa*[4] says that Paṇḍukābhaya sat with Cittarāja at the time of *chaṇa*. The word *chaṇa* (Skt. *kṣaṇa*) here denotes a festival held at an auspicious moment. The *Mahāvaṃsa-Ṭīkā* mentions that the water festival at the time of Devānampiya-Tissa also was held under a certain constellation.[5] References to soothsayers and astrologers are numerous. Paṇḍuvāsudeva's arrival was predicted by soothsayers.[6] So was Bhaddakaccānā's arrival.[7] Brāhmaṇas well-versed in *mantras* declared that Cittā's son would slay his uncles for the sake of sovereignty.[8] Paṇḍukābhaya consulted

1. Mhv. viii, 24.
2. *Ibid.* x, 96.
3. *Ibid.* x, 100.
4. *Ibid.* x, 87.
5. MṬ. p. 329.
6. Mhv. viii, 14.
7. MṬ. p. 272.
8. Mhv. ix, 2.

astrologers and soothsayers on the building of the city of Anurādhapura.[1] When the soothsayers saw the seats spread for Mahinda and other theras they predicted that the country was conquered by them and that they would be the lords of the land.[2]

Pre-Buddhist Ceylon knew a number of cults and religious beliefs of various types with their small groups of followers in different places. But there is no evidence that any of them was so systematically organised as to be a power in the land as, we shall see, was the case with Buddhism.

1. Mhv. x, 75.
2. *Ibid.* xiv, 53.

4.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BUDDHISM

The introduction of Buddhism to Ceylon is attributed to Asoka's son Mahinda who came to the Island about the middle of the 3rd century B.C.[1] Although this may be regarded as the official introduction of Buddhism to Ceylon, it is not reasonable to believe that information about the Buddha and his teachings and the news of the great activites of the mighty Buddhist Emperor of India had not reached the Island earlier. We have seen that from the time of Vijaya there had been constant intercourse between the two countries. The Pāṇḍyans of South India were originally a Kṣatriya tribe of Āryans who migrated from the Madhyadeśa, the scene of the Buddha's life-long activities.[2] The Paṇḍyan families that came to Ceylon in the early days would naturally have brought some knowledge of the Buddha and his teachings, and some of them might even have been Buddhists.

We have seen that Asoka's social activities embraced Ceylon, and that his *dūtas* (envoys) probably visited the Island before

1. Dpv. vii, 18, 19 ; xii, 39-54; Smp. (SHB), pp. 29, 40; Mhv. v, 195; xiii, xiv. Hiuen Tsiang says that Buddhism was introduced to Ceylon by "the younger brother of Asoka-rāja, Mahendra by name". (Hiuen Tsiang, Bk. XI, p. 246.) But there is no reason to pay undue attention to this statement. Hiuen Tsiang gathered his information by hearsay. Pāli records are much more reliable. Mahinda came to Ceylon, worked here and died here. The people of Ceylon, more than any other nation, would naturally have had intimate and authentic information about Mahinda.

2. PLC. p. 17 ; D.R. Bhandarkar : *Carmichael Lectures* (1918), p. 9 ff.

Mahinda. It is very likely that they spoke to the people of Ceylon about Asoka's Buddhist activities. H. Oldenberg[1] thought, without good reason, that Buddhism was not introduced to Ceylon by Mahinda, as related in the Sinhalese chronicles, but spread gradually over the Island from the neighbouring Kaliṅga land. It is strange, however, that no mention is made of a single Buddhist edifice among the religious buildings erected by Paṇḍukābhaya.[2] Both Oldenberg and Malalasekera agree[3] that this silence was probably due to a natural tendency on the part of Buddhist chroniclers to concentrate all attention on Mahinda and thus connect the introduction of Buddhism into Ceylon with the most distinguished person conceivable, the great Asoka. But it is hardly justifiable to suggest there was any such conscious effort on the part of the chroniclers. It may be that although Buddhism was known to the people and although there were even a few Buddhists scattered in the Island, it was not necessary to erect any particular religious edifice as there were no bhikkhus to constitute a definite religion before Mahinda's arrival.[4]

Mahinda came to Ceylon with four other theras. His purpose in bringing them was evidently to confer the *upasampadā* on anyone who desired to get it.[5] In his party, which was composed of seven,[6] there were two who were his close relations—Sumana Sāmaṇera, the son of his sister Saṅghamittā, and Bhaṇḍuka Upāsaka, the son of his mother's sister's daughter. Their inclusion in the party signified, perhaps, a particular intimacy with and friendliness towards Ceylon.

The Pāli chronicles record that the first meeting of Mahinda and Devānampiya-Tissa, who was on a hunting expedition, took place on the Missaka-pabbata, now known as Mihintalē, about

1. *Vinaya Piṭaka*, intro. p. l ff.
2. Mhv. x, 96-102.
3. *Vinaya*, Intro. p. lii; PLC. p. 19.
4. See below, p. 53 ff.
5. Mhvg. p. 246, *Anujānāmi bhikkhave sabba-paccantimesu anapadesu vinayadhara-pañcamena gaṇena upasampadaṃ.* See also below, p. 154 ff.
6. Dpv. xii, 34-35; Smp. (SHB), p. 40; Mhv. xiii, 4, 16, 18.

eight miles to the east of Anurādhapura, on the full moon day of the month of Jeṭṭha.[1]

Devānampiya-Tissa who had already heard of Buddhism from his friend Asoka received the Buddhist missionaries with the greatest kindness and regard. During their first conversation, Mahinda, in order to gauge the king's intelligence and capacity to understand, put to him some questions. This test, which can be regarded as the first intelligence test recorded in history and, though simple and easy at first glance, required a clear and acute mind to answer it.[2]

Mahinda was convinced that Devānampiya-Tissa was intelligent enough to understand the teaching of the Buddha, and proceeded at once to preach the *Cūlahatthipadopama-sutta* to him.[3]

The selection of this sutta by Mahinda for his first sermon was very appropriate. The sutta gives a clear idea of the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha, and describes how one is converted to Buddhism and becomes a bhikkhu. It also describes in detail the simple and holy life of a bhikkhu, the sublime qualities he practises and possesses, the things from which he abstains, the various stages of development of his life and his attainment of arahantship which is the final fruit of Buddhism. The sutta contains also almost all the principal teachings of the Buddha, such as the Four Noble Truths. Apart from a general knowledge of Buddhism, it was necessary for Mahinda to convey to his host who knew nothing about Buddhist practices, an idea of the Saṅgha and their mode of life, so that the king might learn how to treat his new guests. At the end of the sermon Devānampiya-Tissa and his retinue expressed their willingness to embrace the new faith.[4]

1. Dpv. xii, 40 ; Smp. (SHB), p. 41 ; Mhv. Xiii 18–20. It is usual to expect all important events in Buddhist history to take place on a full moon day.

2. Mhv. xiv, 16–21; Smp. (SHB), p.45; Dpv. xii, 53. In this connection it is interesting to remember that Mahinda came fresh from the Third Council at which Buddhism was defined as *Vibhajja-vāda*. Hence Mahinda's interest in the logical and analytical mind.

3. M. I, p. 185 ; Dpv. xii, 53; Smp. (SHB), p. 45; Mhv. xiv, 22.

4. Dpv. xii, 54 ; Smp. (SHB), p. 45 ; Mhv. xiv, 23.

There is no difficulty in understanding how happy Devānampiya-Tissa was to receive as his guest the son of his friend Asoka. He invited all to his capital, but they preferred to stay on the mountain.[1]

Next morning Mahinda and his companions entered Anurādhapura. They were received by the king and taken into the royal house. Soothsayers who saw to the arrangements made for Mahinda's entertainment predicted complete success for the mission.[2] Mahinda himself was convinced that the Sāsana would be firmly established,[3] evidently because of the unmistakable cordiality of the king's reception.

After the meal Mahinda addressed the royal household. He selected for the occasion a subject which would appeal to an audience mainly composed of the ladies of the king's house.[4] First he related to them stories from the *Petavatthu* and the *Vimānavatthu*, two Pāli texts which deal with the spirits of the dead in the *peta*-world and in the *deva-loka* (heavenly world) according to their past karma. This must have appealed to the audience already possessing faith in the spirits of the dead,[5] and would have made Buddhism agreeable and acceptable to them. It explained their belief in a more satisfactory manner. Mahinda ended his sermon by expounding the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism according to the *Saccasaṃyutta*.[6] Here, too, he had occasion to show them how dreadful was *saṃsāra*, the cycle of births and deaths to which they were endlessly subject.

Other sermons followed in quick succession to ever-increasing audiences. The suttas chosen for these sermons are significant, particularly in view of the mental attainments and beliefs of the listeners. The first was the Devadūta,[7] which deals with the

1. Mhv. xiv, 26.
2. Mhv. xiv, 53 ; Smp. (SHB), p. 46.
3. Smp. (SHB), pp. 46–47.
4. Mhv. xiv, 55–58.
5. See above, p. 36 ff.
6. The last section of the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* dealing with the Four Noble Truths.
7. Mhv. xiv, 63 ; M. III p. 191.

results of good and bad action ; the misery that awaits criminals and the descriptions of the tortures of hell. It was designed to persuade men to desist from wrong-doing for fear of evil consequences.[1] Next came the *Bālapaṇḍita-sutta*[2] which teaches how through folly men commit evil suffer therefor both here and hereafter. The wise man, on the contrary, abstains from evil, does good and attains to happiness in both worlds. The sermons were designed to show how the consequences of actions were to be felt here and now, and not only in some future birth. Mahinda introduced a new theme: emphasis was laid on the moral side of religion as a requisite for a happy life. It brought to his audiences a new vision, unfolding new horizons of spiritual development.

On the pressing invitation of the king, Mahinda and his companions made their residence in the royal pavilion of the Mahāmegha park which was "neither too far nor too near the city".[3] Devānampiya-Tissa visited the theras and inquired how they liked the place, and when he learnt from Mahinda that it was genial and comfortable, he offered the Mahāmeghavana to the Saṅgha, pouring water from a vase over the hand of Mahinda as a token of the gift.[4]

This gift expressed in a tangible and visible form the inner religious devotion of the king and assured the material security necessary for the spiritual life of the monks. Mahinda therefore made in public the most important declaration that Buddhism would be established in Ceylon.[5]

After the Mahāmeghavana was offered to the Saṅgha, Mahinda at once set about to plan the headquarters of Buddhism which in later times became the famous Mahāvihāra, the great centre of Buddhist culture and learning in the Island, the stronghold of

1. Dpv. xiii, 7–8, *bhūtiṃ satte pāpuṇiṃsu.*
2. Mhv. xv, 3–4 ; M. III, p. 178.
3. Mhv. xv, 8.
4. *Ibid.* xv, 14–15 ; 24–25.
5. Smp. (SHB), p. 48. But Mhv. xv, 26, says that Buddhism "was established" (*patiṭṭhitattā dīpamhi sāsanassa*). But this does not agree with verses 180-181 according to which Buddhism would not be established till the *sīmā* was fixed.



Ceylon Archaeological Survey

(1) Some of the caves at Mihintalē where Mahinda and the earliest Buddhist monks from India lived. (p. 52)



Ceylon Archaeological Survey

(2) Refectory, Mihintalē,

(The two stone tablets set out the rules and regulations of a monastery and the servants' emoluments Mahinda IV, 10th cent.) (p. 52)

V



CETIYAGIRI (Sāñchi)

(This is a reproduction of a painting by Col. F. C. Maisey before the demolition of the stūpas in 1851.)

(p. 53

the Theravāda. There is very good reason to believe that what later came to be called the Holy City of Anurādhapura was originally planned and laid out by Mahinda. There was no one at the time in Ceylon better educated, cultured and refined, more widely travelled and better informed than Mahinda himself. He had lived in large cities, like Pāṭalīputra, the magnificent capital of the Magadhan Empire ; he had seen great monasteries like Asokārāma built by his father and Cetiyagiri (modern Sāñchi) in Vidisā built by his mother. There was no one therefore who could plan an *ārāma*, a monastery, better. When we divest the accounts given in the chronicles of their miracles, myths, poetic embellishments and exaggerations, we see Mahinda going round Mahāmeghavana along with Devānampiya-Tissa locating the sites proper for a *mālaka* for Acts of the Saṅgha, for a tank with a room for warm baths (for their comfort), for the planting of the Bo-tree for the Uposatha Hall of the Saṅgha for a place where gifts offered to the Saṅgha would be divided for a refectory for the brotherhood and for the Mahāthūpa.[1] Here we see the skeleton of the Mahāvihāra at Anurādhapura.

The acceptance of the Mahāmeghavana was followed by the preaching of the *Aggikkhandhopama-sutta* [2] which teaches the lesson that a bhikkhu should be virtuous and live a holy life, so that those who provide him the necessities of life may be benefited and that he himself may attain *Nibbāna* the ultimate goal. This is for his own benefit as well as for the benefit of others. The sermon on this occasion, after a great gift, seems to have been a suggestion that the bhikkhus on whom the king lavished so much hospitality were worthy of such treatment, and that the king himself would be justly rewarded for his good deeds.

Soon afterwards Devānampiya-Tissa asked the Thera whether Buddhism was now established in the Island.[3] The Pāli sources

1. Mhv. xv, 27–172. These were probably the main features of an *ārāma* at the time. The omission of a *Paṭimāghara*, image-house, is noteworthy. Further observations will be found in Chapter VIII.

2. Mhv. xv, 176 ; A. p. 695.

3. We should remember here that whem Mahāmeghavana was offered to the Saṅgha on the previous day, Mahinda declared that Buddhism would be established. Now the king is anxious to know whether it is established. According to Smp. this question was put much later.

differ in their records of Mahinda's answer. The *Dīpavaṃsa*[1] and the *Mahavaṃsa*[2] agree that Mahinda's reply was that Buddhism would be established only if a *sīmā* for the *uposatha* and other Acts of the Saṅgha were established according to the teachings of the Buddha. The *Samantapāsādikā*[3] records a different answer : "O great king" answers the Thera, "the Sāsana is established, but its roots are not yet gone deep". "When will the roots go deep?" Mahinda's answer is most remarkable : "When a son born in Ceylon (Tambapaṇṇidīpa)' of Ceylonese parents, becomes a monk in Ceylon, studies the *Vinaya* in Ceylon and recites it in Ceylon, then the roots of the *Sāsana* are deep set."

On what authority Mahinda made this bold statement we do not know. But one thing is clear : he had no intention of retaining either for himself or his nationals, who were responsible for the establishment of Buddhism in Ceylon, any special power or prerogative. He did not seek to create any vested interests or to adopt an attitude of patronage. His sole concern was that the religion of the Buddha should secure a firm hold in the Island and continue to develop for the benefit of the people. If his acheivement could be called a conquest, it was only a moral, spiritual and cultural conquest of the highest order conceivable, and not a political or economic acquisition.

The idea of the "establishment" of Buddhism in a given geographical unit with its implications is quite foreign to the teaching of the Buddha. Such a thing was never expressed by the Master. True it is that the Buddha sent forth his disciples to go about in the world preaching the dhamma for the "good of the many".[4] But nowhere had he given injunctions or instructions regarding a ritual or a particular method of "establishing" the Sāsana in a country. Buddhism is purely a personal religion. Once a man realizes the Truth, Buddhism is established in him. Thus, Puṇṇa, one of Buddha's own disciples, goes to his home in

1. Dpv. xiv, 21–25. Dpv. uses the words *saṅghārāma* and *vihāra* in place of *sāsana*.

2. Mhv. xv, 180–181.

3. Smp. (SHB), p. 60.

4. Mhvg. p. 19.

Sunāparanta—a morally backward country, notorious for its wicked people—and converts a large number of them to Buddhism.[1] According to the *Majjhima-nikāya* Commentary[2] the Buddha himself was later invited to that country. But there is no talk at all about the "establishment" of the Sāsana there. Similarly, in the story of Kaṭṭhavāhana, which is somewhat analogous to that of Asoka and Devānampiya-Tissa, there is no mention of the "establishment" of the Sāsana there.[3]

This notion of establishing the Sāsana or Buddhism as an institution in a particular country or place was perhaps first conceived by Asoka himself. He was the first king to adopt Buddhism as a state religion, and to start a great spiritual conquest which was called *Dharma-vijaya*. Buddhism was the first missionary religion and Asoka was the first missionary king to send out missions for the conversion of other countries. Like a conqueror and a ruler who would establish governments in countries politically conquered by him, so Asoka probably thought of establishing the *Sāsana* in countries spiritually conquered (*dharma-vijita*) by him. Resourceful organizer and psychologist as he was, he felt it necessary to adopt some sort of ceremonial which would indicate in a concrete form to ordinary folk the "establishment" of the religion in their midst.

Regarding the actual ceremony adopted in Ceylon, the authorities differ. The *Dīpavaṃsa*[4] and the *Mahāvaṃsa*[5] agree that the *Sāsana* was established in the Island with the establishment of the boundaries or the *sīmā*. Devānampiya-Tissa expressed his desire that the city should be included in the *sīmā*, so that he himself, his retinue and his subjects could live "within the order of the Buddha"[6]; and this was done accordingly.[7]

1. M. III, p. 269 ff. *Puṇṇovāda-sutta*.
2. MA. p. 1016 ff.
3. See above, p. 32 n. 2.
4. Dpv. xiv, 21–25.
5. Mhv. xv, 180–181.
6. *Ibid.* xv, 182–183.
7. *Ibid.* xv, 184–185.

According to the *Samantapāsādikā* the ceremony of establishing the *Sāsana* was performed much later — even after the Maha-Bodhi had been planted at Anurādhapura. The king's nephew Mahā-Ariṭṭha Thera, who had formerly been a minister of state, was selected by Mahinda for the act of reciting the *Vinaya* at the ceremony.[1] Perhaps both ceremonies were performed, but on two different occasions, the second marking a further stage in the establishment of the *Sāsana*.

Although the two versions differ in the letter they agree in the spirit. A *sīmā* is necessary for Acts of the Saṅgha, where the recitation of the *Vinaya* is essential. The recital of the *Vinaya* (by Maha-Ariṭṭha) before the Saṅgha is tantamount to an act of the Saṅgha. Thus the establishment of the *Sāsana* is ultimately reduced to the establishment of the Saṅgha which is not possible without a *sīmā* and the recital of the *Vinaya*.[2]

Mahinda stayed in Anurādhapura for 26 days. During this period things moved rapidly and great changes took place. He delivered a number of sermons to convince the people of the value of the new faith. Most of these sermons dealt with the transitoriness of life, the dreadful nature of *saṃsāra*, and the noble life necessary to escape from *saṃsāra* and to attain *Nibbāna*. His sermons also included the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*[3] which deals with the fundamental teachings of the Buddha.

On the twenty-seventh day Mahinda left Anurādhapura and went to Missaka-pabbata to spend the *vassa* (*vas*), or the rainy season, there.[4] The same day the king's nephew Mahā-Ariṭṭha, the minister, with fifty-five others joined the order of the Saṅgha.[5] Thus there were sixty-two monks in the Missaka-pabbata to spend the first *vassa* season.[6] Since there were no houses for their

1. Smp. (SHB), p. 60.

2. In the Dpv. the king asks whether the *saṅghārāma* has been established, and Mahinda answers that it will not be till a *sīmā* is established (Dpv. xiv, 22). Even today an *ārāma* is not regarded complete without a *sīmā*.

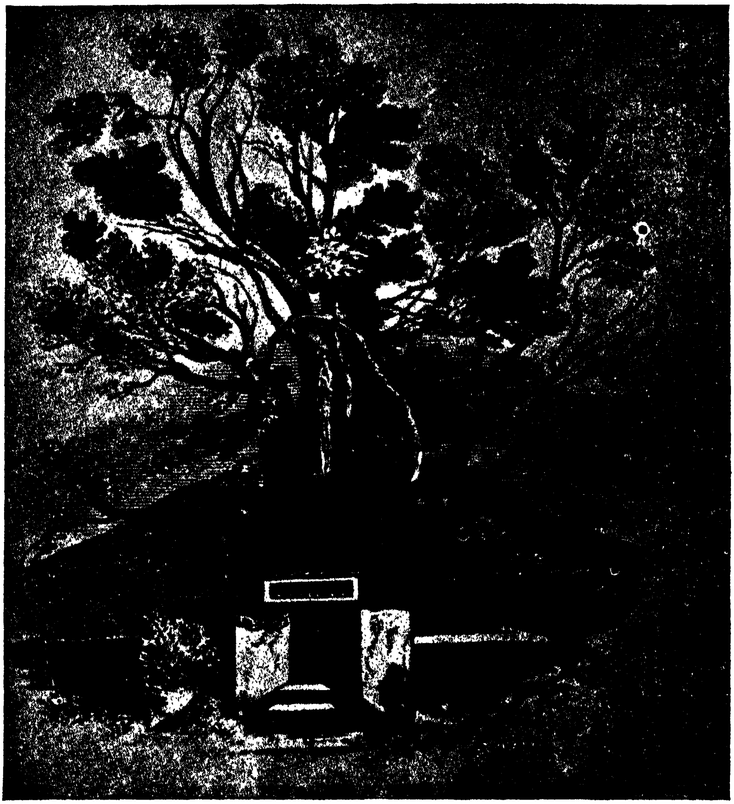
3. Mhv. xv, 199; *Dhammacakka-sutta* in Mhvg. p. 9 ff.

4. Mhv. xvi, 2 ff.

5. *Ibid.* xvi, 10–11.

6. *Ibid.* xvi, 17. It should be remembered that Bhaṇḍuka was ordained on the day Mahinda arrived at Missaka-pabbata (Mhv. xiv, 32).

VI



The SACRED BO TREE, Anurādhapura.
(*An artist's impression in 1855.*)

(p. 56

VII



Photo: Kōyū Tamura, Tokyo.

The SACRED BO TREE, Anurādhapura, as it is today. (p. 57)

occupation, Devānampiya-Tissa had the caves in the neighbourhood of the present Kaṇṭaka-cetiya cleared and prepared for their use.[1] Meanwhile the sub-queen Anulā and her companions had expressed a desire to join the Order as nuns and, on Mahinda's suggestion,[2] Devānampiya-Tissa despatched to the court of Emperor Asoka an embassy to bring the Therī Saṅghamittā along with the southern branch of the Bodhi-tree.[3]

Anulā and her companions awaited Saṅghamittā's arrival observing *dasa-sīla* (ten precepts) in a nunnery known as the Upāsikā-vihāra which had been built for them on one side of the city.[4]

After the rainy season, Mahinda, in his usual gentle manner, suggested to Devānampiya-Tissa the idea of building a cetiya to enshrine the relics of the Buddha.[5] Sumana Sāmaṇera who acted as deputy on behalf of Mahinda and Devānampiya-Tissa was able to obtain for Ceylon from his grand-father Asoka the right collar-bone, and a large quantity of other bone relics together with the almsbowl of the Buddha.[6] These relics were kept at the Missaka-pabbata for the time being, and henceforth the mountain was named Cetiya-pabbata.[7] The collar-bone of the Buddha was enshrined in the Thūpārāma Dāgāba which thus became the first cetiya to be built in Ceylon.[8]

When Saṅghamittā arrived with the branch of the Bodhi-tree, Anulā and her women entered the order of bhikkhunīs.[9] The former Upāsikā-vihāra was improved and enlarged with several additions and it was called Hatthāḷhaka-vihāra or Bhikkhunupassaya.[10] Saṅghamittā also lived in the same nunnery.[11]

1. Mhv. xvi, 12. 2. *Ibid.* xv, 16–23.

3. *Ibid.* xviii, 1 ff. It is quite appropriate that the southern branch should be sent Ceylon which is situated in the south.

4. *Ibid.* xviii, 9–12.

5. *Ibid.* xvii, 1 ff.

6. *Ibid.* xvii, 9–21.

7. *Ibid.* xvii, 23. It may perhaps be that Mahinda re-named the Missaka Hill in memory of Cetiyagiri his mother's monastery in Vidisā.

8. *Ibid.* xvii, 50.

9. *Ibid.* xix, 65.

10. *Ibid.* xix, 69–71.

11. *Ibid.* xix, 68.

The planting of Bodhi branch was performed with great ceremony. Representatives from all parts of the Island—from the north as well as from the south—were present on the occasion.[1] Asoka himself had sent a large number of families to attend on the Bodhi tree.[2] Subsequently the saplings of this Bodhi were planted in Anurādhapura and its vicinity and in Jambukolapaṭṭana and in the village of Tivakka Brāhmaṇa in the north, in Kājaragāma (Kataragama) in the south and in Candanagāma (unidentified).[3] Later, some thirty-two saplings were distributed all over the Island.[4]

The bringing of the Bodhi branch and the relics of the Buddha along with his *pātra* (alms-bowl) further strengthened the great cultural link between India and Ceylon. The planting of the Bodhi-tree was symbolic of the establishment of Buddhism and Buddhist culture in the Island. The relics of the Buddha were regarded as representing the Buddha himself, and their enshrinement was as good as Buddha's residence in Lankā. The *pātra-dhātu* (the alms-bowl of the Buddha) was kept within the king's house,[5] and it became a national "palladium" of the Sinhalese, just as happened later in the case of the Tooth Relic.

As the Brotherhood of bhikkhus increased in number, Devānampiya-Tissa had to establish several monasteries besides the Mahāvihāra and Cetiya-pabbata. The *Mahāvaṃsa*[6] records that the place where those who entered the Order of Monks from noble families lived became Issarasamaṇaka[7] (place of "noble monks"), and the place where those who entered the Order from the Vaiśya caste lived became Vessagiri (Mountain of the Vaiśyas).[8] Does this suggest that caste and class differences

1. Mhv. xix, 54.
2. *Ibid.* xix, 1–4.
3. *Ibid.* xix, 60–62.
4. *Ibid.* xix, 63–64.
5. *Ibid.* xx, 13.
6. *Ibid.* xx, 14–15.
7. So-called Vessagiri near Anurādhapura. For its identification with the ancient Issarasamaṇārāma see E.Z.IV, p. 128 and CJSc. G.II, 182. MṬ. also identifies Issarasamaṇaka-vihāra with Kassapagiri-vihāra, which is now accepted as modern Vessagiriya, MṬ. p. 407. *Issarasamaṇasaṅkhāte Kassapagiri-vihāre.* This agrees with inscriptional evidence.
8. Not yet identified, but see C. W. Nicholas in J.R.A.S., C.B., New Series, Vol. V, pt. 2, p. 150.

VIII



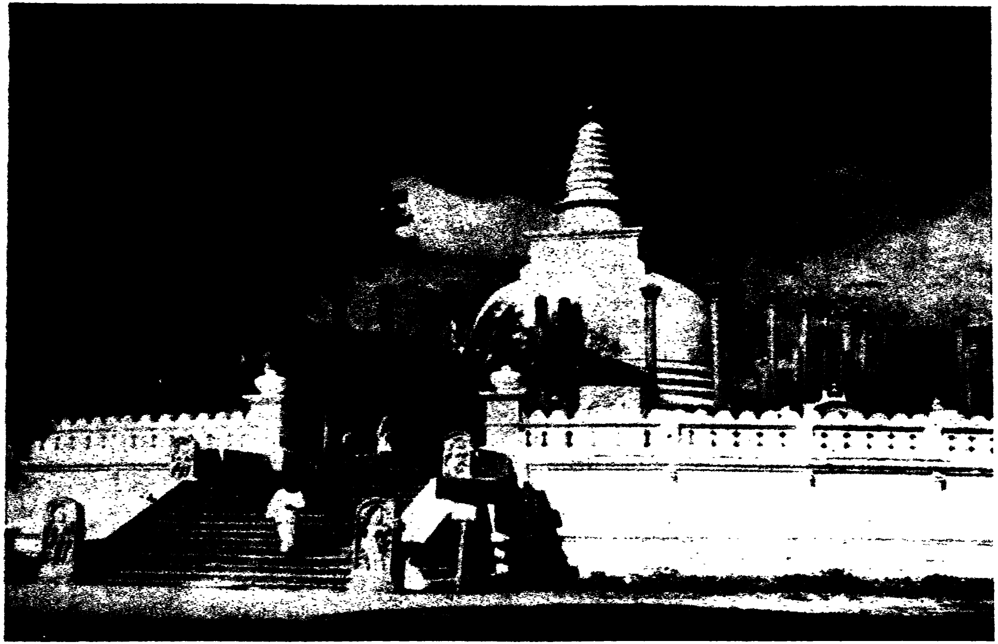
Ceylon Archaeological Survey

A GROUP OF VESSAGIRIYA CAVES, Anurādhapura.

(The caves provided shelter for early Buddhist monks.)

(p. 58)

IX



Ceylon Archaeological Survey

THE THŪPA OF THŪPĀRĀMA, Anurādhapura (3rd century B.C.)

(The earliest Dāgāba in Ceylon, as it is to-day.)

(p.59)

were in existence in the Saṅgha of Ceylon even from the earliest times? Devānampiya-Tissa also built a public refectory called Mahāpāli[1] in Anurādhapura for the use of the Saṅgha. He is also said to have built a vihāra in Jambukolapaṭṭana in Nāgadīpa, and the well-known Tissamahāvihāra.[2]

Mahinda came to Ceylon when he was a young man of thirty-two. He died at the ripe age of eighty at Cetiyapabbata while spending *vassa* retreat there during the eighth year of King Uttiya (200 B.C.), Devānampiya-Tissa's younger brother and successor to the throne.[3] Cetiyas enshrining his relics were built at Anurādhapura, Cetiyapabbata and several other places in Ceylon.[4] Saṅghamittā died in the following year at the Hatthāḷhaka nunnery at Anurādhapura.[5]

Mahinda's arrival in Ceylon can be regarded as the beginning of Sinhalese culture. He brought to Lankā not only a new religion but also a whole civilization then at the height of its glory. He introduced art and architecture into the Island along with *saṅghārāmas* and *cetiyas*. He can be regarded as the father of the Sinhalese literature. Buddhaghosa says that Mahinda brought to the Island of the Sinhalese the commentaries of the Tripiṭaka

1. Mhv. xx, 23.
2. *Ibid.* xx, 23.
3. Dpv. xvii, 95 ; Mhv. xx, 29–33.

The Dpv. and Mhv. state that Mahinda died when he was *saṭṭhivasso* "sixty years". The number of years in the life of a bhikkhu is generally calculated from his *upasampadā* which he receives usually at the age of twenty. Therefore to arrive at the actual age 20 must be added. The *Cullavagga*, p. 426 says : *Ajito nāma bhikkhu dasavasso saṅghassa pātimokkhuddesako hoti* "a bhikkhu named Ajita who was of ten years was a reciter of pātimokkha to the Saṅgha". That is, Ajita was 30 years old. Mahinda when he came to Ceylon was 12 years : *Mahā -Mahinda thero so tadā dvādasa-vassiko* (Mhv. xiii,1), i.e. he was 32 years of age. In the same way when Mahinda was referred to as *saṭṭhivasso* (60 years) at the time of his death, he was in fact 80 years old. The term *vassa* means "rainy season" as well as "year". The "religious age" of a bhikkhu is calculated by the number of *vassa* retreats he has passed. When a monk is old, he is generally referred to as *saṭṭhi-vassika* (MA. p. 150 ; DA. p. 205 ; Vsm. p. 36) i.e. 80 years of age. This does not mean that he was exactly 80, but that he was old. Sometimes the term *vassa* is used to mean "year" in the ordinary sense.

4. Mhv. xx, 44–45.
5. *Ibid.* xx, 48–50.

and put them into Sinhalese for the benefit of the people of the Island.[1] He thus made Sinhalese a literary language and inaugurated its literature. It is probable that he introduced the Asokan alphabet as well.[2]

The remarkable success of Mahinda's mission and the unusually rapid spread of Buddhism in the Island were due to many reasons. Mahinda's arrival was the consummation of a series of social, cultural and diplomatic relations between India and Ceylon. Devānampiya-Tissa was eager to earn the friendship of Asoka. After the king of Ceylon and the important ministers who were his relations had accepted Buddhism, the rest was plain sailing. Although there were a number of various small religious groups scattered about the country, there was none systematically organized or powerful enough to oppose the new faith. On the other hand, Buddhism offered to the people of Ceylon a new order of life which was far superior to that which they had known and followed so far. The example of the simple, saintly life of the monks who devoted their time for the good of the many was an inspiration to the king as well to the peasant. The code of morality that the new religion taught was certainly conducive to a happy and peaceful home -life.

Medium of communication with the Sinhalese offered but little obstruction to the work of the missionaries. If we compare the language of Asoka's inscriptions and the inscriptions of Ceylon in the 3rd century B.C., we can see that the two languages were almost similar. There were slight differences between the two, but it was possible for the speaker in one language to follow without much difficulty the ideas expressed in the other.

Preaching seems to have been the chief method of propagation. Ārāmas, with cetiyas and Bodhi-trees as objects of worship, were established in important villages for the residence of monks. These became centres of knowledge, and propagated Buddhism

1. *Sīhaḷadīpaṃ pana ābhatātha vasinā Mahā- Mahindena Thapitā Sīhaḷabhāsāya dīpayāsīnam atthāya*—MA. p. 1.

2. Saṅghamittā's influence over the women of Ceylon in moulding their life and character was equally great.

and Buddhist culture. One would expect Mahinda to have followed methods of religious propaganda in Ceylon similar to those of Asoka in India. But two factors are conspicuous by their absence. Asoka established a large number of edicts for the propagation of his Dharma. But in Ceylon not a single *Dharma-lipi* established by Devānampiya-Tissa, either on rock or pillar, has so far been discovered. And no Department of *Dharma-mahāmātras* was established by Devānampiya-Tissa in Ceylon as had been done by Asoka in India. Why did Mahinda not advise Devānampiya-Tissa to publish *Dharma-lipis* in Ceylon following his father's practice in India? Was it because Ceylon was too small and the inhabited area so limited that the king's orders could quickly be proclaimed throughout the country? Perhaps there was no need for such methods of propaganda in Ceylon, as the bhikkhus applied themselves untiringly to the spread of Buddhism throughout the country.

5.

BUDDHISM AS STATE RELIGION

We have seen that the Emperor Asoka was the first king to adopt Buddhism as the state religion in India about two centuries after the Buddha's death. But in Ceylon it became the state religion* from the day of its introduction into the Island.

Devānampiya-Tissa's request to Mahinda to establish the *sīmā* so as to include the city in order that the king could live "within the Buddha's command" is significant.[1] From that day in the third century B.C. to the end of the Sinhalese rule in the 19th century A.C., only a Buddhist had the legitimate right to be king of Ceylon. By about the 10th century, this belief had become so strong that the king of Ceylon had not only to be a Buddhist but also a Bodhisattva.[2] The Jetavanārāma slab inscription[3] of Mahinda IV (956-972 A.C.) proclaims that "none but the Bodhisattvas would become kings of Sri Laṅkā" and that they "received this assurance (*viyāraṇ*) from the omniscient Buddha."

Kīrti Niśśaṅka Malla (1187-1196 A.C.) says in his inscriptions that Laṅkā belongs to Buddhism and that, therefore, non-Buddhists like Colas and Keralas have no right to the throne of Ceylon.[3]

* By state religion is meant the religion recognized by the state as its official religion.

1. Mhv. xv, 182–183.

2. E.Z. I, pp. 234, 237.

3. Polonnaruva : Galpota, E.Z. II, p. 109; North Gate Inscription, *ibid.* p. 159.

The *Pūjāvaliya*, a Sinhalese prose work of the 13th century, expresses this idea more explicitly : "This Island of Laṅkā belongs to the Buddha himself ; it is like a treasury filled with the Three Gems. Therefore the residence of wrong-believers in this Island will never be permanent, just as the residence of the Yakṣas of old was not permanent. Even if a non-Buddhist ruled Ceylon by force a while, it is a particular power of the Buddha that his line will not be established. Therefore, as Laṅkā is suitable only for Buddhist kings, it is certain that their lines, too, will be established."[1]

A historical document dealing with the ancient Sinhalese law, written by the Malvatta Chapter, Kandy, to the Dutch Governor Falk (1765-1785 A.C.) in Colombo, who governed the maritime provinces, says that the first rule is that the king of Ceylon should not give up Buddhism and embrace another religion.[2]

That this belief was prevalent even as late as the 19th century can be seen from a letter dated June 13, 1816, written by Brownrigg, Governor of Ceylon, to William Wilberforce in England. It says : "It is currently received that there existed a close connection between the independence of the Kandyan Kingdom and the religion of Buddhism. Budha (*sic*) it is believed engaged to protect their Monarchy against all foreign power or influence."

Even the Dravidians who ruled the Island occasionally had to become Buddhists at least for the purpose of office, whether they in their heart of hearts liked it or not. For example, Eḷāra, the Chola prince who ruled in Anurādhapura in the 2nd century B.C., is reported to have gone to Cetiya-pabbata (Mihintalē) to pay homage to and invite the Saṅgha foı alms. "Though he did not know the great virtues and value of the Three Gems", says the *Mahāvaṃsa*, "he went to Cetiya-pabbata and invited the Saṅgha following the custom" (*cārittam anupālayaṃ*).[3] The

1. Pjv. p. 656.
2. *Prabhāsodaya*, 1930, May, p. 17.
3. Mhv. xxi, 21–22.

author of the chronicle seems to have held that Eḷāra had no genuine interest in Buddhism, but that he had, nevertheless, to follow the established custom of the land.[1]

What was this custom or *cārittaṃ?* In the ancient days the customs of virtuous men (*sadācāra*) handed down in regular succession (*pāramparyākarmāgata*)[2] formed part of the established law of the country, ranking in the same category as religious injunctions and legal enactments. In Ceylon, too, the law of the land was nothing but the established customs of the country. Eḷāra had to follow these customs therefore for the sake of good government. There are several other instances in the *Mahāvaṃsa* which elucidate this point.

Thus Bhātiya (38-66 A.C.) is stated to have followed all injunctions laid down by the ancient kings regarding Buddhist religious practices.[3] Mahādāṭhika Mahānāga (67–79 A.C.) observed all religious practices established by earlier kings and by his brother.[4] Siri-Meghavaṇṇa (*c.*362A.C.), who inaugurated the Mahinda festival, decreed that the festival should be held annually. The author of the second part of the *Mahāvaṃsa*, who lived in the 13th century, says that this royal order had been carried out continuously down to his day by all succeeding kings.[5] An inscription[6] of the 10th century, which records certain rules regarding the administration of a village called Hopiṭigama, refers to earlier laws as *pere-sirit* "former customs". *Siritlēnā* of the 12th century was the legal secretary or minister of justice.[7] The Sinhalese *sirit* and Pāli *cāritta*, meaning "custom", were the usual words used to convey the modern idea of "law" which included also tradition.

1. MṬ. II, p. 483 refers to an Eḷāra image house—*Eḷāra-paṭimāghara.* Whether this meant a house where an image of the Buddha made by Eḷāra was kept, or a house where an image of Eḷāra himself was kept is not quite clear.

2. Manu, II, 12, 18.

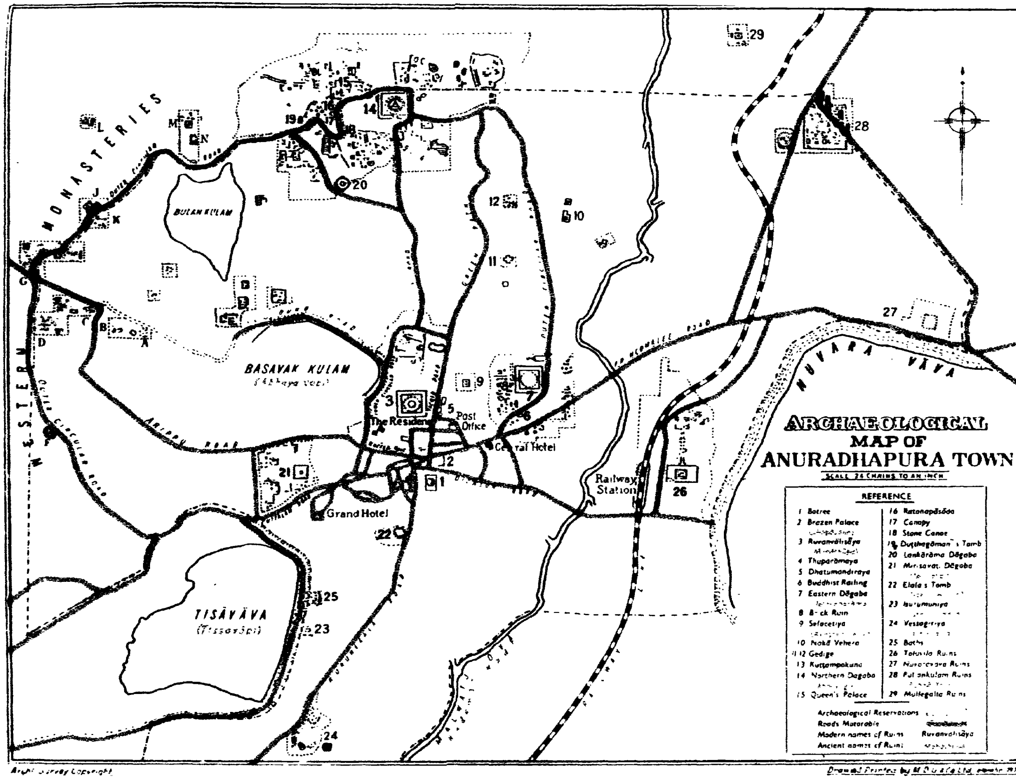
3. Mhv. xxxiv, 67.

4. *Ibid.* xxxiv, 85.

5. *Ibid.* xxxvii, 88–89.

6. E.Z. III, p. 75. Badulla Pillar Inscription. (Revised in V, pt. 2, pp. 177–195.)

7. Nks. p. 18.


ARCHAEOLOGICAL
MAP OF
ANURADHAPURA TOWN
SCALE 24 CHAINS TO AN INCH
REFERENCE
1 Botree
2 Brazen Palace
3 Ruvanvälisäya
4 Thuparämaya
5 Dhatumandiraya
6 Buddhist Railing
7 Eastern Dägaba
9 Selacetiya
10 Nakä Vehera
11 12 Gedige
13 Kuttampokuna
14 Northern Dagaba
15 Queen's Palace
16 Ratanapäsäda
17 Canopy
18 Stone Canoe
20 Lankäräma Dägaba
22 Elala's Tomb
23 Isurumuniya
25 Baths
28 Pul ankulam Ruins
29 Mullegalla Ruins
Archaeological Reservations
Roads Motorable
Modern names of Ruins
Ruvanvälisäya
Ancient names of Ruins
WESTERN MONASTERIES
BULAN KULAM
BASAVAK KULAM
TISÄVÄVA
NUVARA VÄVA
The Residency
Post Office
Central Hotel
Grand Hotel
Railway Station
Outer Circular Road
Aripu Road
Trincomalee Road
Archl. Survey Copyright

From these examples we can clearly see that there were religious customs and practices established by kings which were recognized as part of the law of the land. And these had to be honoured by the kings of Ceylon, whether they were Sinhalese or Dravidians.

Even the two Tamils, Sena and Guttika, who ruled at Anurādhapura about 30 years before Eḷāra, seem to have been Buddhists. The use of the word *dhammena* "righteously" in the *Mahāvaṃsa*[1] in referring to their rule suggests that they governed the country as Buddhists, or, at least, according to Buddhist customs. How else could one rule *dhammena?* Could a *micchādiṭṭhi* "wrong-believer" who was considered a mere animal (*pasu-sama*) rule "righteously"?

An inscription[2] which records certain donations made to a vihāra by the queen of Khudda-Pāriṇda (5th century A.C.) refers to her husband, who was a Tamil,as *Budadasa Ḷa-Parideva*, which means Buddhadāsa Khudda-Pārinda. The use of the word Buddhadāsa, "the servant of the Buddha" as an epithet proves definitely that Khudda-Pārinda was a Buddhist, or at least wished to create that impression. His predecessor Pārinda also, in his inscription at Aragama, records his donations to a Buddhist monastery.[3] Another inscription[4] at Kataragama registers a grant by Dāthiya, the son of Tiritara,[5] to the Maṅgalamahācetiya (modern Kiri Vehera) at Kataragama.

Dāthiya belonged to the same Tamil dynasty as Pārinda and Khudda-Pārinda. Paranavitana thinks[6] that these Tamil princes, who ruled at Anurādhapura for 27 years towards the end of the 5th century, were Buddhists by faith.[7] Several Tamil officials,

1. Mhv. xxi, 11.
2. E.Z. IV, p. 114.
3. E.Z. IV, p. 113.
4. *Ibid.* III, p. 218.
5. Paranavitana gives plausible reasons for the identification of Mahadäḷi Mahanā and his father Sarataraya mentioned in the inscription with Dāṭhika and Tiritara. (See CJSc. G. Vol. II, p. 181.)
6. E.Z. IV, 114.
7. Moreover, we can gather from these inscriptions that these Tamil rulers were not only Buddhists but that they also added such Sinhalese titles as Abhaya (Apaya) and Mahānāga (Mahanā) to their own names(while they ruled in Ceylon)in order to identify themselves even more closely with the people. E.Z. III, 218 ; IV, 114.

such as Potthakuttha and Mahākanda, in the service of Aggabodhi IV (658-674 A.C.) are also reported to have built vihāras and made grants to monasteries.[1] It is well known that the Dravidian kings of the Kandy period following the example of the earlier Sinhalese kings, professed the Buddhist faith, observed Buddhist customs and supported Buddhism.

Although the king was included in the laity, his position was quite different from the rest of the lay people. The Buddha and the Cakkavatti-Emperor are regarded almost equally in the suttas. The *Lakkhaṇa-sutta* of the *Dīgha-nikāya* maintains that the Buddha and the Cakkavatti are both endowed with the thirty-two marks of the Great Man (*Mahāpurisa-lakkhaṇa*). If a person who has these thirty-two marks lived the worldly life, he became a Cakkavatti; if he left home, he became a Buddha. The *Aṅguttara-nikāya* declares that they are both *acchariya-manussā* ("wonderful men") who are born "for the good of the many", and that they both are *thūpārahā* ("worthy of monuments.").[2] While the Buddha holds sway over the entire spiritual world, the Cakkavatti is the ideal supreme ruler of the secular world. On this assumption, even an ordinary king is given a position far above other laymen. Hence we find that the Buddha has advised bhikkhus to follow the instructions of the king.[3]

It is quite natural, therefore, that the king of Ceylon was regarded as the secular head of Buddhism who protected the *Sāsana*. In the 10th century, Mahinda IV declares clearly that a kṣatriya becomes a king "for the purpose of defending the alms-bowl and the robe of the Buddha".[4] The king, as the defender of Buddhism, was so highly respected that even words originally used in reference only to the Buddha and arahants

1. Mhv. xlvi, 19-23.

2. A. p. 47. The *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* regards four people as worthy of thūpas: Tathāgata, Pacceka-Buddha, Sāvaka, Cakkavatti (D. II, p. 87). According to the *Manusmṛti* the king is a great deity in human form and surpasses all created beings. (Manu. V, 93-94; 96-97; VII, 4-13.)

3. *Anujānāmi bhikkhave, rājānaṃ anuvattituṃ.* (Mhvg. p. 164.)

4. E.Z. I, p. 237, *tumā pay sivur rak (nu-va)s.* In this context the alms-bowl and the robe (*pay sivur*) of the Buddha represent Buddhism. Cf. the English royal title "Defender of the Faith."

came to be applied to the rulers of Ceylon. For instance, the term *pirinivi* (*parinibbuta*), which is used only in connection with the decease of a Buddha or an arahant, was used in the 10th century in reference to the death of a king.[1]

In the same manner, the ecclesiastical term *vat-himi* (*upajjhāya-sāmi*) which should, strictly speaking, be used only in reference to a Buddhist monk, was applied also to kings and rulers from about the 8th century A.C. as a mark of great respect.[2]

As the secular head and defender of Buddhism it was one of the primary duties of the king to look after the well-being of the *Sāsana*. Hence we quite often find kings engaged in the "purification of the *Sāsana*", whenever they found it to be disorganized or corrupt.[3] It was the duty of the state to suppress, by law or expulsion, undesirable heretical elements that stained the purity of the *Sāsana*. The king also felt it his duty to intervene whenever there arose within the Saṅgha disputes that could not be easily settled by the monks thenselves. Thus king Kaṇirajānu-

1. E.Z. III, pp. 75, 77, *satalosa piriniviyan vahanse.*

2. *E.g.*, see Rock Inscriptions at Rässahela, E.Z. IV, pp. 173, 174; Kirigallāva Pillar Ins. E.Z. II, pp. 3–4 ; and Badulla Pillar Ins. E.Z. III, p. 75; Kaḷudiyapokuṇa Ins. E.Z. III, pp. 258–259, 264–266.

Wickremasinghe (E.Z.I, p. 35, n. 7) says that *vat-himi* may be derived either from the Skt. *vastu-svāmin* "lord of property", or *vṛtta-svāmin* "director of religious observances". Paranavitana (E.Z. III, p. 86 ff.) has not made any suggestion as regards its derivation. And K. Paññākitti Thera's suggestion that *vat-himi* is derived from *upajjhāya-sāmi* seems the most plausible.

The *Dhampiyā-Aṭuvā-Gäṭapadaya*, a work of the 10th century (p. 116 line 10), paraphrases the words *upajjhāyavattaṃ* as "*vat teranaṭa kaṭayutu vat*". Commenting on the name Belaṭṭhisīsa, the same work (p. 153, line 14) says : "*Ānanda mahaterun vajateru Belaṭṭhisīsa maheterun*". Cf. Pācit. p. 87. *Āyasmato Ānandassa upajjhāyo Belaṭṭhisīso*. The *Dharmapradīpika* of the 12th century (p. 293) uses the word *vaddājuran* in the sense of *upajjhācariya*. The *Mahāvupasiddhi-Sannaya* of about the 14th century (p. 267) paraphrases the word *upajjhāyassa* as "*vajāduranye*". The Nks. of the last part of the 14th century (p. 12) uses *vat-terun* in the sense of *upajjhāyatthera*. We must remember that in old Sinhalese *sanna* books, which give a word for word meaning, the derived Sinhalese form is used to paraphrase the original Pāli or Skt. word wherever possible. From the above examples we can see that the forms *vaja*, *vadu*, *vat* are derived from *upajjhāya* or *upajjka* (through **uvaja*). The dropping of an initial short vowel before the stronger accent of the second syllable is common in Sinhalese. See Geiger : *A Grammar of the Sinhalese Language*, p. 34.

3. *E.g.*, Vohārika-Tissa, Goṭhābhaya, Moggallāna I, Moggallāna III, Silāmeghavaṇṇa, Aggabodhi VII, and Sena II. See also below, p. 104.

Tissa (89-92 A.C.) is reported to have acted as judge over a dispute at the Uposatha House at Cetiyagiri.[1] It is strange that a layman should have entered an Uposatha House to adjudicate in the affairs of the Saṅgha. But it is quite certain that the king decided the case within the Uposatha House itself.[2] Whether he entered the Uposatha House on the invitation of the Saṅgha, or on his own initiative, we are not certain. However that may be, it is clear that the king as the secular head of the religion either actually had or assumed for himself the authority to decide the cases of the Saṅgha.[3] During Mahāsena's reign, Tissa Thera who accepted the Jetavana-Vihāra was disrobed by the Minister of Justice.[4] Although a charge of *pārājika* offence against him was finally proved by the Saṅgha, they had not the power to disrobe him without the aid of the state.[5]

Even though the king was "the defender of the faith" his authority over matters ecclesiastical was subservient to that of the Saṅgha. He had no power to force the hands or the Saṅgha against their wish. When, for example, Silāmeghavaṇṇa (617-626 A.C.) requested the monks of the Mahāvihāra to perform the *uposatha* ceremony with those of the Abhayagiri, the Mahāvihāra refused to comply with the king's request, and the king was powerless to enforce his will.[6] On another occasion the monks of the Mahāvihāra applied the Act of *Pattanikkujjana* ("turning down of the alms-bowl"), the greatest insult that could be meted out to a layman, on Dāṭhopatissa II who had acted against the wishes of the Mahāvihāra.[7]

1. Mhv. xxxv, 10–11.

2. MṬ. p. 640.

3. It should be noted that the king's act did not have the approval of the whole community but only of a part of the Saṅgha, the greater part. See below, p. 86.

4. Mhv. xxxvii, 39.

5. We learn also from the Anurādhapura Slab Inscription of Kassapa V (913–923 A.C.) that high officials of state interfered in monastic disputes whenever the Saṅgha were unable to settle them by themselves (E.Z. I, p, 44).

6. *Ibid.* xliv, 80.

7. *Ibid.* xlv, 31. The *Mahāvaṃsa* goes so far as to indicate that Dāṭhopatissa's illness and subsequent death were evidently due to his desire to act counter to the wishes of the Saṅgha and his finding fault with them for their failure to accede to his request.

Although there were occasional disagreements between the Saṅgha and the state regarding religious and spiritual matters, there was evidently no friction between the two over matters political and mundane. Bhikkhus never seem to have attempted to wield political power directly by themselves. But they always used their influence to help and support kings whom they could persuade to carry out their wishes. Mention is made, however, of bhikkhus who took an active part in bringing about settlements between political leaders and even selecting kings. Godhagatta-Tissa thera settled the civil war between Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī and his brother. Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī blamed the thera for not asking them to make peace earlier, and further said that even a sāmaṇera of seven years could have stopped the war.[1] There is a story of how Mahātissa Thera brought about a settlement of far-reaching consequence between Vaṭṭagāmaṇī and his generals.[2] Dhātusena was brought up and educated for the kingship by a thera.[3] When the sub-king Mahinda was anxious to make a treaty with Sena II (851-885 A.C.) he took monks with him to support his plea.[4] There are many instances of individual theras acting as advisers to kings.[5]

Sometimes bhikkhus went to the extent of selecting princes for the throne and supporting their favourites, even to the extent of violating the laws of succession. When Saddhā-Tissa died (59 B. C.), the Ministers of State consecrated Thullatthana in preference to Lajji-Tissa (the lawful heir to the throne) with the approval of the Saṅgha who assembled at the Thūpārāma for the purpose.[6] Bhikkhus allowed Moggallāna I (496-513 A.C.) to collect his troops at a vihāra[7] and, after his victory over Kassapa I, he was received ceremoniously at the Mahāvihāra by the Sangha.[8]

1. Mhv. xxiv, 49-57. Was this just an expression of politeness?
2. *Ibid.* xxxiii, 71-77.
3. *Ibid.* xxxviii, 16 ff.
4. *Ibid.* li, 14.
5. *E.g., Ibid.* xlii, 22 ; xlvi, 6.
6. *Ibid.* xxxiii, 17, 18. This interference was, however, exceptional and was greatly resented by the legitimate king.
7. *Ibid.* xxxix, 21.
8. *Ibid.* xxxix, 29–31.

By the 10th century we find it even stated that it was the Saṅgha who conferred the kingship. This evidently shows that it considered itself as representing the public opinion of the country. In the Jetavana Slab inscription, Mahinda IV declares that the kings of Śrī Laṅkā who are Bodhisattvas are wont "to serve and attend on the great community of monks on the very day they celebrate the coronation after attaining to the dignity of *kingship, bestowed by the Mahāsaṅgha* (the great community of monks) *for the purpose of defending the bowl and the robe*".[1] This definitely shows that the approval of Saṅgha was essential for the coronation of a king. In later times, too, the bhikkhus continued to take a prominent part in the appointment of kings.[2]

The influence of the Saṅgha over the masses was so great that rulers were careful to win the hearts of the bhikkhus for the sake of peaceful and successful government. To obtain the approval of the Saṅgha was to ensure public support. That was probably why Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī put the relics of the Buddha into his spear and envited the Saṅgha to accompany him in the war "because their sight is both blessing and protection to us".[3] When Mahinda II (772-792 A.C.) was ready to launch a campaign against Rohaṇa, he "assembled all the bhikkhus and other wise people" at the Thūpārāma and obtained their consent for his military project.[4] In other words, he was thus assured of public support and sympathy for his campaign.

The first thing that a king did after ascending the throne was to display his interest in religion by giving alms and granting

1. E.Z.I, pp. 234, 237, 240: *tumā pay sivur rak (nu-va)s Mahasaṅg-hu piḷiāvyū rajsiri pāmiṇā sānā bisev vindna (da)vas mahasaṅg-haṭ meheyaṭ uvasar-vas.*

2. *E.g.*, Mhv. lxi, 1–3, says that after the death of Vijayabāhu I (1055–1114 A.C.) the deceased king's sister, her three sons, ministers of state and the bhikkhus took counsel together, and unanimously conferred the kingship on the sub-king. The election of the last king of Kandy, after the death of Rājādhirājasiṃha, was carried out by an assembly of chief ministers of state, the heads of the Buddhist Church and the governors of provinces. See Davy's *Travels in Ceylon*, p. 159.

3. Mhv. xxv, 1–4. *Maṅgalañ ceva rakkhā ca bhikkhūnaṃ dassanaṃ hi no.*

4. *Ibid.* xlviii, 126–127.

endowments, building or repairing monasteries of holding grand religious festivals.[1]

The coronation or *abhiṣeka* of kings, which was originally a secular business of the state, later assumed the garb of a religious ceremony. The *Mahāvaṃsa-Ṭīkā*[2] records some interesting details about this state function. The vessels which contained the regalia used for the coronation ceremony were made of clay taken from seven specific spots, all of which are holy places. Clay for this purpose had to be taken from under the northern flight of steps either of the Mahābodhi, or of Lohapāsāda, or of Pagompamālaka, or of Mahācetiya (Ruvanvälisāya), or from under the northern door of the Catussālā, or from under the steps of the entrance to the hall named Samujjava where the bhikkhus used to drape their robes. The specific statement that clay should be taken from under the steps of these places shows clearly that the coronation of a king was regarded as having religious significance. Ultimately, in the 9th century, this ceremony of coronation seems to have been held in the vihāra itself. For instance, Sena II (851-885 A.C.) had his coronation at the Mahācetiya (Ruvanväliāya) and decreed in writing that the ceremony should be performed every year.[3]

The constitutional position of Buddhism was so strong that to act against the *Sāsana* was regarded as high treason. Thus, one of the charges framed against the war criminals who were against Dhātusena (460-478 A.C.) during the preceding Tamil rule was that "these men protected neither the king nor the *Sāsana*."[4]

Further, we learn from the document (already referred to) supplied by the Malvatta Chapter, Kandy, headed by Saraṇaṅkara Saṅgharāja, to the Dutch Governor Falk (1765-1785) in Colombo, that according to ancient Sinhalese law "those who destroyed dāgäb and Bō-trees and those who plundered religious property

1. *Ibid.* passim. See also below chs. vi and vii.
2. MṬ. p. 307.
3. Mhv. li, 82.
4. *Ibid.* xxxviii, 38 *te maṃ vā sāsanaṃ vā no rakkhiṃsu.*

were punishable with death."[1] There is reason to believe that this law was in force even as early as 2nd century B.C. For, it is stated[2] that on one occasion when Eḷāra was returning from Mihintalē, his chariot-wheel did some damage to a cetiya. His ministers drew his attention to what had happened. The king, who was famous for his equal and impartial administration of justice to all, at once got down from his chariot and laid himself down on the road and said : "Cut my head too with this chariot-wheel". But the ministers refused to do it saying that the Buddha never wished harm to others, and further they requested the king to obtain pardon by repairing the damage. This shows that death was probably the penalty for the crime of causing damage to places of Buddhist worship in ancient Ceylon.

In fact the *Sāsana* constituted a fully-fledged state department. Safeguarding the purity and well-being of the *Sāsana* and maintaining the Saṅgha and the monasteries were duties incumbent mainly on the state, although private individuals and the public collectively established and maintained ārāmas on a smaller scale. There were full and permanent staffs paid by the state to look after the business of the larger monasteries such as Mihintalē and Abhayagiri. These were governed by rules and regulations laid down by the king with the approval of the Saṅgha.[3]

Even taxes on goods were levied for the maintenance of ārāmas. An inscription (probably of the 10th century) on a canoe found at the site where the ancient Mahāpāli was situated, declares : "To this Mahāpāli shall be taken at the rate of one *pata* (Skt. *prastha*) of paddy from each sack brought into the city."[4]

Trading on pōya days was prohibited by law. Whoever traded on such days had to pay a fine which was utilized for

1. Prabhāsodaya, 1930 May, p. 19.
2. Mhv. xxi, 22–25.
3. E.Z. I, pp. 84, 115, 232 ff. A detailed discussion will be found in chs. viii and ix.
4. E.Z. III, p. 133. "This would work out to be a rate of 6¼ per cent., a rather excessive figure". E.Z. III, p. 135.

religious purposes. An inscription[1] of the 10th century, originally set up in the neighbourhood of Mahiyaṅgaṇa during the reign of Udaya III (945-953 A.C.), declares that from whosoever trades on pōya days (*pohodā*) a *padda* (certain measure) of oil should be levied for the offering of lamps ; and that this offering should be made at the great monastery of Mahiyaṅgaṇa ; and that from those who failed to pay the penalty in oil, fines according to former customs (*pere sirit*) should be levied and used for the offering of lamps.[2]

The Order of *Māghāta* (prohibiting the killing of animals) which was proclaimed by several kings,[3] was purely religious, based on the principle of *ahiṃsā* taught in Buddhism. There were men who made their living by hunting. These had probably to change their old profession and find new ones.[4]

Bhikkhus were remunerated by the state according to their ability and services.[5] Buddhadāsa fixed "salaries" for preachers (*dhammabhāṇaka-vaṭṭaṃ*)[6] here and there, and he is also reported to have given them revenues and servants (*bhoge kappiyakārake*)[7] Vohārika-Tissa freed monks from debts by paying three hundred thousand.[8]

All the important relics of the Buddha received from India were considered the property of the state. The *Pātradhātu*, the alms-bowl of the Buddha, which was brought to Ceylon during the reign of Devānampiya-Tissa, was kept within the palace

1. E.Z. III, p. 74. Badulla Pillar Inscription. (See ft. nt. 6, p. 64 above.)

2. Although most of these laws and customs were inscribed on stones mostly in the 10th century they were in practice in earlier times, as we learn from this inscription.

3. *E.g.*, Mhv. xxxv, 6, Āmaṇḍagāmaṇī (79–89 A.C.); Mhv. xxxvi, 28, Vohārikatissa (269–291 A.C.), abolishing physical torture as penalty; Mhv. xli, 30, Silākāla (524–537 A.C.); Mhv. xlvi,3, Aggabodhi IV (658–674 A.C.); Mhv. xlviii, 23, Kassapa III (717–724 A.C.).

4. Whether this resulted in the whole nation becoming vegetarian, we do not know.

5. See Mahinda IV's inscription at Mihintalē, E.Z. I, p. 84 ff.

6. Mhv. xxxvii, 149.

7. *Ibid.* xxxvii, 173.

8. *Ibid.* xxxvi, 39; see below (p. 90) for this state of affairs.

itself.[1] This was later considered such an important national possession that one of the seven Tamil invaders during the reign of Vaṭṭagāmaṇī took it with him to India and was "well-contented" thereby.[2] Upatissa I (4th century) used it in a ceremony to dispel a famine and a plague, and ordered that the ceremony should be repeated in similar circumstances.[3] It is well known that the Tooth Relic was regarded as a property of the state and the national palladium. In later times the possession of these two relics, namely, the Tooth and the Alms-bowl, was considered essential for a prince who wished to be the recognized king of Ceylon.[4] The *Kesadhātu*, the Hair Relic which was brought to Ceylon by Silākāla, was enshrined in an image-house and paid special honour by Moggallāna I (496-513 A.C.).[5]

There is reason to think that the title of *Asiggāha*, which was specially inaugurated on the occasion when the Hair Relic was brought, was a religious honour conferred by the king on high government officials. Silākāla who brought the *Kesadhātu* was made the first *Asiggāha*, the Sword-bearer, and also was given the distinction of being the guardian of the Relic.[6] The *asi* or sword connected with this Order of *Kesadhātu* was perhaps symbolic of the sword with which Prince Siddhārtha cut his hair before he became an ascetic.[7]

The title of *Asiggāha* which became a great royal honour was conferred only on very important personages; all its recipients later ascended the throne. Silākāla himself became king. Saṅghatissa II and Silāmeghavaṇṇa, who had the distinction of being *Asiggāhakas*, both ultimately ascended the throne.[8]

1. Mhv. xx, 13.
2. *Ibid.* xxxiii, 55. This was later brought back to Ceylon.
3. *Ibid.* xxxvii, 189–198. See also below, p. 276 ff.
4. Codrington : *Short History of Ceylon*, pp. 57, 60, 67, 77, 80. Mendis: *Early History of Ceylon*, pp. 107, 133.
5. Mhv. xxxix, 49–54.
6. Mhv. xxxix, 54.
7. It is mentioned that in the *paṭimāghara* or image house in which the Hair was kept an image of a horse also was placed (Mhv. xxxix, 52). Perhaps this is symbolic of the horse on which Siddhārtha rode before he cut his hair on the day of his renunciation.
8. Mhv. xlii, 42; xliv, 1, 43, 64–65.

The offering of the kingdom by kings to the *Sāsana*, which was not uncommon in ancient Ceylon, was also symbolic of the principle that the state was run for the good of Buddhism. Devānampiya-Tissa offered his kingship to the Mahābodhi.[1] Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī is reported to have bestowed the kingdom of Ceylon on the *Sāsana* five times—each time for seven days.[2] It would be very interesting if we could get some information about the way the government was administered during these short periods. It may be that the king renounced the idea of kingship for the time being and allowed the government to go on as usual. It is, however, unlikely that if circumstances, e.g., a rebellion, necessitated the king's interference, he would have hesitated to interfere.[3] King Tissa offered the kingdom of Ceylon to Kāla-Buddharakkhita as a gift for his sermon.[4] Sirimeghavaṇṇa offered the whole kingdom to the Tooth Relic.[5] Moggallāna I, after his victory over his brother Kassapa, went to the Mahāvihāra and offered the State Parasol, the symbol of kingship, to the Saṅgha, but it was duly returned.[6] Aggabodhi II, after the restoration of Thūpārāma, offered the whole country to the thūpa.[7]

It would be interesting and instructive to inquire why the national wealth and energy and administrative ability of the country were thus lavishly bestowed on Buddhism. Was the motive purely spiritual and other-worldly? There is no doubt that it was partly so. But the major results were reaped immediately—in this world. The monasteries formed the centres of national culture, and bhikkhus were the teachers of the whole nation—from prince to peasant. They helped the king to rule the country in peace. It was the duty of the bhikkhus according

1. Mhv. xviii, 36.
2. *Ibid.* xxxi, 36 ; xxxi, 90, 92, 111.
3. Was the offering a mere formality while the king went on with his government as usual?
4. MA. I, p. 470.
5. Dāṭhā, v, 360.
6. Mhv. xxxix, 31.
7. *Ibid.* xlii, 61.

to the Vinaya to side with the kings.[1] They used their influence over the masses to support the king who, in return, looked after their interests. It was a matter of mutual understanding, though it was never explicitly stated. The king found a powerful means of propaganda in the Saṅgha who had close contact with the people, and great influence over them. Hence we find kings who had committed heinous crimes honouring the Saṅgha and sending them round the country in order to influence the people in their favour. For instance, Kassapa II (641-650 A.C.) who had plundered the monasteries (including the Thūpārāma) during his unregenerate days as a rebel, made large endowments to vihāras and sent preachers round the country after ascending the throne.[2] It was easy for the king to rule if the people were religious. King Mahānāma of Ceylon in a letter to the Chinese Emperor says that kings "were happy if men practised righteousness".[3] They were happy because they knew that if men practised "righteousness" there would be no disturbances. Religions are always expected to uphold the established order and discourage innovations and revolutions. Such an attitude of mind, which the rulers ordinarily attempt to inculcate into the minds of their subjects, could best have been produced by a religious organization. Whatever the kings did for the Saṅgha was therefore amply rewarded.

We have to admit that from the day that Buddhism was adopted as a state religion, it began to lose its original spirit of renunciation and simplicity, and gradually developed into an ecclesiastical organization with its numerous duties, religious,

1. Mhvg. p. 164.
2. Mhv. xliv, 148.

Geiger translates the words *sabbāgāmiya-bhikkhūhi* as "by all the foreign bhikkhus". L. C. Wijesinha : "holy monks who lived not among the habitations of men". I doubt the validity of the reading and the two translations. If we read *sabbagāmiya* it can be translated as "by all bhikkhus who went about", which suits the context quite well. *Gāmika* means "going", "wandering", "travelling". See P.T.S.Dict. under *gāmika* 2 The change of *-ika* into *-iya* is quite common in Pāli. Cf. *Bhātika* and *Bhātiya* (MA. p. 350); *piṇḍapātika* and *piṇḍapātiya* (MA. p. 355); *dhammika* and *dhammiya* (Smp. (SHB) p. 503).

3. JRAS. (CB), Vol. XXIV, No. 68, I (1917), p. 83.

political and social. It is impossible for any religion, when it becomes an organized body, to continue in its original form. It has to change with the times if it is to maintain its power and prestige. "Adapt or perish" is nature's inexorable imperative.

6.

YEARS OF DEVELOPMENT—I

We have seen in a previous chapter that during the forty-eight years that Mahinda worked in Ceylon Buddhism was firmly established in the Island, and spread in most parts of the country. The following century saw a very rapid progress of the new faith among the people. According to the *Mahāvaṃsa*[1] many hundreds of vihāras, great and small, were established during the period. Devānampiya-Tissa's four brothers who ruled in succession after him at Anurādhapura did their best to spread the religion by opening new centres and providing maintenance for bhikkhus.[2] Kākavaṇṇa-Tissa and other rulers of Rohaṇa, the southern principality, built a large number of vihāras. Among these Tissamahārāma, Cittalapabbata (the famous centre of meditation) and Kirivehera at Kataragama should be mentioned.[3] Tissa of Kalyāṇī (modern Kälaṇiya) played his part in propagating Buddhism in the western principality.[4] Kākavaṇṇa's younger son, Tissa, was in charge of Dīghavāpi in the eastern province of the Island.[5]

1. Mhv. xxi, 7.

2. Pre-Christian inscriptions at Riṭigala (Ariṭṭha-pabbata), donating caves to the Saṅgha, show that that mountain was used as a centre of meditation as early as the third century B.C. (E.Z. pp. 135 ff.). Sūratissa (187–177 B.C.) improved the place (Mhv. xxi, 6).

3. Mhv. xxii, 23 ; E.Z. III, p. 214. Dhātu., p. 22, attributes several vihāras in Rohaṇa to Mahānāga and Yaṭṭhālaya-Tissa.

4. Mhv. xxii, 13.

5. *Ibid.* xxiv, 14, 15, 58.

Under the influence of the new religion the Sinhalese worked in peace and harmony, and the country became prosperous. But soon there came adventurers from south India who disturbed the peace and progress of the Island. One such was Eḷāra, a Chola prince, who invaded Ceylon about the middle of the second century B.C., captured the government at Anurādhapura, and ruled for about forty-five years. Though the northern part of the Island was under a foreign rule, Rohaṇa remained independent.

This long period of foreign rule gave rise to several important developments, both national and religious, in the history of the Island. Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī the son of Kākavaṇṇa-Tissa of Rohaṇa, undoubtedly the greatest national hero of early Buddhist Ceylon, organized a great campaign to liberate Buddhism from foreign rule. His war-cry was "Not for kingdom, but for Buddhism".[1] The entire Sinhalese race was united under the banner of the young Gāmaṇī. This was the beginning of nationalism among the Sinhalese. It was a new race with healthy young blood, organized under the new order of Buddhism. A kind of religio-nationalism, which almost amounted to fanaticism, roused the whole Sinhalese people. A non-Buddhist was not regarded as a human being. Evidently, all Sinhalese without exception were Buddhists.

After the defeat of Eḷāra, the victorious Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī repented of the destruction of many thousands of human lives. Eight arahants from Piyaṅgudīpa are reported to have assured the king that there was no cause for repentance, that only one and half human beings had been slain—one who had taken refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha, and the other who had observed the five precepts—and that the rest, who were wrong-believers (*micchādiṭṭhī*) and men of evil life (*dussīlā*), were equal to animals (*pasusamā*)! "But thou wilt illumine the doctrine of the Buddha in many ways; therefore dispel care from thy mind."[2]

1. Mhv. xxv, 2. *pāragaṅgaṃ gamissāmi jotetuṃ sāsanaṃ ahaṃ;*
   Ibid. xxv, 17. *rajjasukhāya vāyāmo nāyaṃ mama kadāpi ca,*
   Sambuddhasāsanasseva ṭhapanāya ayaṃ mama.
2. *Ibid.* xxv, 103–111.

Thus orthodox religious opinion encouraged Buddhist nationalism. For the first time in the history of Buddhism bhikkhus now officially entered the field of political and mundane interests. At the request of Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī they accompanied the liberating army, "since the sight of the bhikkhus is both blessing and protection for us".[1] Bhikkhus were encouraged even to leave their robes and join the army for the sake of religion and the nation. For instance, one of Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī's ten generals, Theraputta-Abhaya, formerly a Buddhist monk, was persuaded to give up his robes and join the army. After the victory, this general re-entered the order and became an arahant.[2] Gāmaṇī himself had a relic of the Buddha put into his spear.[3] Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī seems to have exploited to the utmost all the religious and national sentiments of the masses in order to unite the people and to rid his motherland of foreign rule.[4]

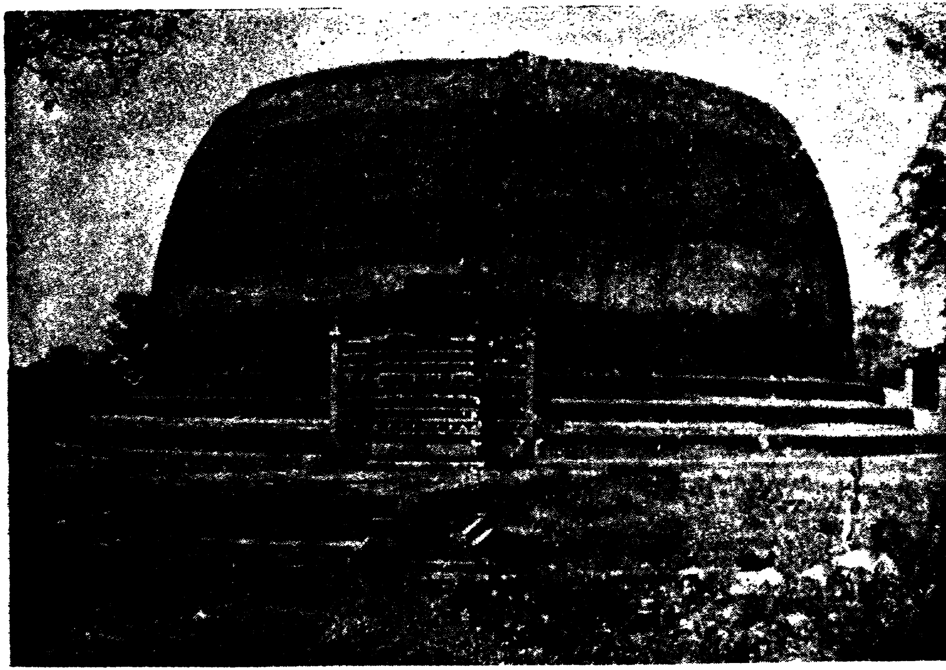
Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī (101-77 B.C.) erected many religious edifices, such as the Mahāthūpa (Ruvanvālisāya), Maricavaṭṭi (Mirisavāṭiya) and the nine-storeyed Lohapāsāda which was the *Uposatha* house of the Mahāvihāra. He made Buddhism the pride of his people and according to the *Mahāvaṃsa*[5] very large numbers came from foreign countries to see the dedication festival of the Mahāthūpa. The prototype of the modern Vesak festival is first referred to during this period. Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī is said to have held twenty -four Vesākha-pūjā.[6]

His brother Saddhā-Tissa (77-59 B.C.), who succeeded him, did a great deal for Buddhism and built, among many other vihāras, the Dakkhiṇāgiri-vihāra[7] in Anurādhapura which later played an important part in the history of Ceylon Buddhism.

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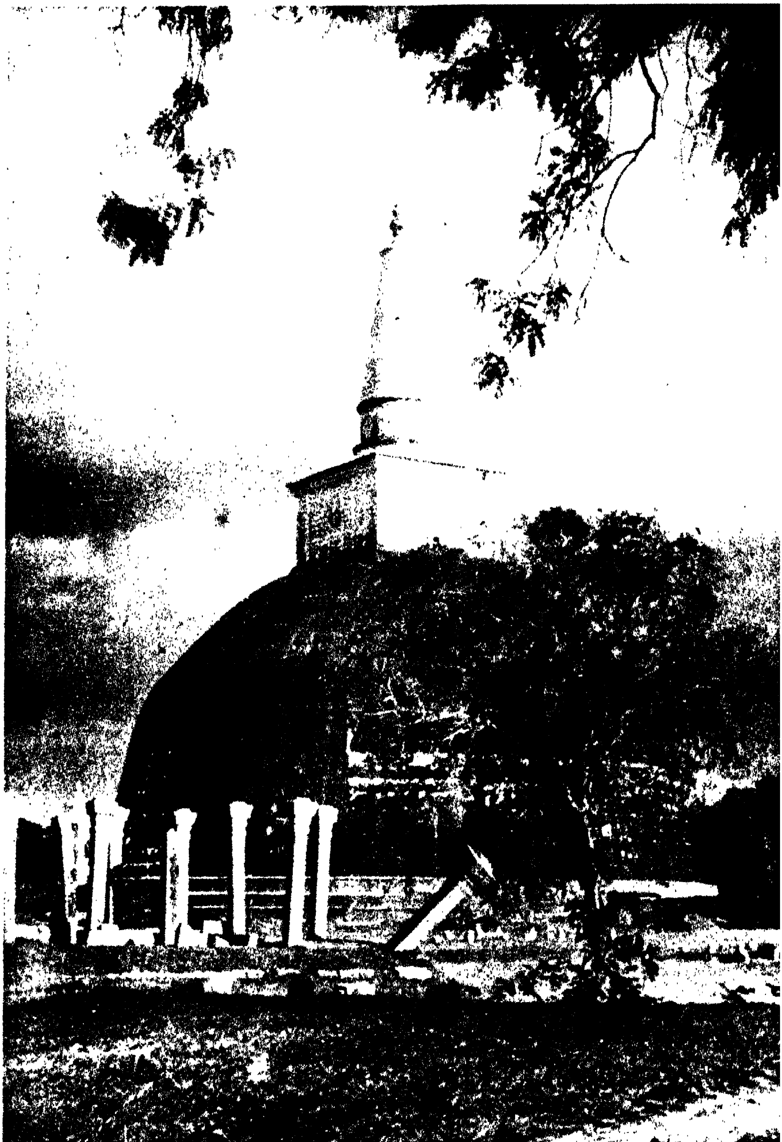
1. Mhv. xxv, 2–4.
2. Rsv. II, p. 93 ff.
3. Mhv. xxv, 1.
4. He can justly be regarded as the originator of religio-nationalism which has persisted through the whole history of Ceylon—down to even the present day.
5. Mhv. xxix, 29.
6. *Ibid.* xxxii, 35.
7. *Ibid.* xxxiii, 7. So-called Eḷāra's tomb.

X



Ceylon Archaeological Survey

MARICAVAṬṬI THŪPA (Mirisavāṭiya), Anurādhapura (1st century B.C.) (p. 80)



Ceylon Archaeological Survey

THE MAHĀTHŪPA (Ruvanvälisāya), Anurādhapura (1st century B.C.)
(*After the restoration.*) (p. 81)

Even as early as the first century B.C. bhikkhus began to take more and more interest in the affairs of state. It was they who conspired to put on the throne Saddha-Tissa's younger son, Thūlathana (59 B.C.), in preference to the elder one, Lajji-Tissa, against the usual custom of succession. Lajji-Tissa (59-50 B.C.) deposed him, and being sorely displeased with the Saṅgha neglected it for three years.[1]

The latter part of the first century B.C. saw some very important events in the Buddhist history of Ceylon. A brahmin named Tissa (or Tīya) in Rohaṇa declared war on Vaṭṭagāmaṇī (43 B.C.). Meanwhile, seven Tamils from south India landed at Mahātittha (Mannar) with strong forces and marched towards Anurādhapura. The country from the south to the north was devastated by war. From 43 B.C. for fourteen years five Tamils ruled in succession at Anurādhapura. King Vaṭṭagāmaṇī lay in hiding in remote places during the period.[2]

In addition to these calamities the whole country was ravaged by an unprecedented famine, generally known as Brāhmaṇa-Tissa famine or Bāminiṭiyāsāya. The people had no food at all and were forced to cannibalism, even eating the flesh of bhikkhus whom they venerated. Many thousands, both bhikkhus and laymen, perished; many vihāras were deserted; the Mahavihāra at Anurādhapura was entirely abandoned ; trees grew in the courtyard, and the Mahāthūpa itself lay in complete neglect. Many bhikkhus left the Island and went to India. The country was in chaos.[3]

The Mahātheras and the leaders of the Sinhalese saw that the future of Buddhism was in danger. Its very existence was threatened. There was no Sinhalese king to support it. The continuation of the oral tradition of the three Piṭakas, which had so far been handed down orally from teacher to pupil, appeared no longer possible under the prevailing adverse circumstances. The primary concern of the Saṅgha during this tragic period was to preserve the teaching of the Buddha which they

1. Mhv. xxxiii, 17–20.
2. *Ibid.* xxxiii, 37–42.
3. VbhA. pp. 314–318 ; AA. p. 52.

valued above all else. Therefore, far-seeing Mahātheras, under the patronage of a local chief, assembled at Aluvihāra at Mātale, and for the first time in history committed to writing the whole of the Tripiṭaka with the commentaries thereon "in order that the true doctrine might endure" (*ciraṭṭhitattham dhammassa*).[1]

At last Vaṭṭagāmaṇī-Abhaya (29-17 B.C.) defeated the Tamils and re-occupied Anurādhapura after fourteen years of supreme struggle. He demolished the Giri monastery of the Nigaṇṭhas (Jains) and built the great Abhayagiri-vihāra pre-fixing his name to it.[2]

The king offered this vihāra to a thera called Mahātissa who had been of great help to him in the days of his misfortune. Five generals of Vaṭṭagāmaṇī also built five vihāras and dedicated them to a thera named Tissa in gratitude for his friendship and help to them in their time of difficulty.

It is said that while Vaṭṭagāmaṇī was preparing for his attack on the Tamils, some of his generals who were disappointed with the king because of his impetuous nature, left him in rage and wished (most probably) to join the Tamils. They were attacked by robbers on the way—the country was infested with robbers during this period of disorder and famine—and escaped into the Hambugallaka-vihāra of Tissa Thera, a learned monk, where they received kindness and protection. When the thera learned their story he was greatly troubled. The nation and religion were being ruined by foreign rule, and here the king and the generals were quarrelling! The wise monk asked the generals: "With whom will it be possible to further the doctrine of the Buddha, with the Tamils or with the king?" The generals became convinced that their attitude was suicidal. Thereupon Tissa and Mahātissa theras took the generals to the king and brought about a lasting reconciliation between them.[3]

1. Mhv. xxxiii, 100–101; Dpv. xx, 45; Nks. p. 9.

2. Mhv. xxxiii, 78–81; Nks. p. 10. When Vaṭṭagāmaṇī was fleeing from Anurādhapura in defeat, the Nigaṇṭha of the Giri monastery which had been built by Paṇḍukābhaya cried aloud: "The great black Sinhalese is fleeing"— *palāyati mahākālasīhalo*. Most probably the Nigaṇṭha was pro-Tamil. Then the king thought: "If my wish be fulfilled, I will build a vihāra here." (Mhv. xxxiii, 42–44.)

3. Mhv. xxxiii, 67–76.

XII



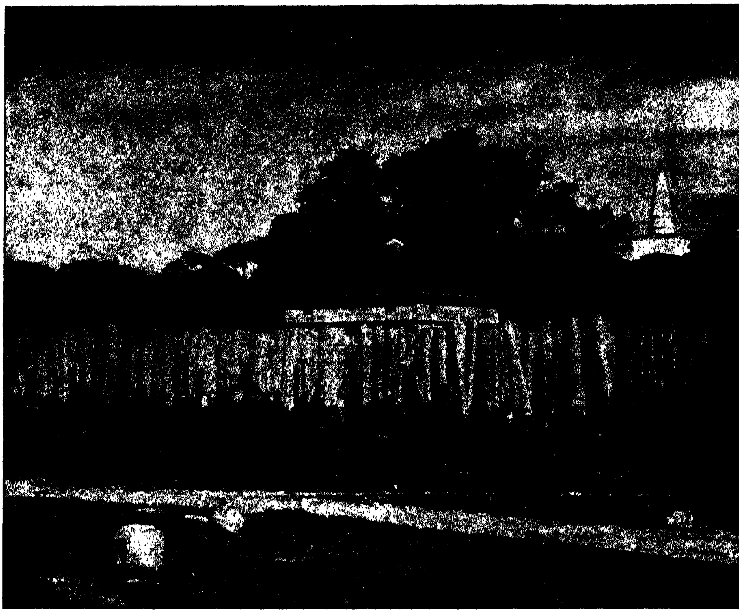
Ceylon Archaeological Survey

ABHAYAGIRI THŪPA, Anurādhapura (1st century B.C.)

(*Rival of the Mahāvihāra.*)

(p. 82)

XIII



Ceylon Archaeological Survey

THE STONE PILLARS OF THE LOHAPĀSĀDA (*Brazen Palace*)

Anurādhapura (1st century B.C)

The Uposatha house of the Mahāvhāra.

(p. 83)

Had the far-sighted theras not intervened at that moment, no one could say what the fate of Buddhism and the Sinhalese race would have been. Only the king and the generals knew what they owed to the learned theras. Out of gratitude, therefore, they spoke feelingly to the theras thus: "If our undertaking prospers, then must you come to us when, a message is sent to you."[1] That was why Abhayagiri and the other vihāras built by the king and the generals were given to Mahātissa and Tissa theras.

This is the first record of a vihāra being given to any monk as a personal gift; it was purely an expression of personal gratitude on the part of the king and his generals. Mahātissa had lived earlier in an unimportant, remote place, and later came to stay at Anurādhapura on the special invitation of the king,[2] and he must therefore have wielded considerable influence over the ruling class. This evidently disturbed the prestige and the authority of the Mahāvihāra monks. They subsequently charged Mahātissa Thera with having frequented the families of laymen (*kulasaṃsaṭṭha,*) and imposed on him the punishment of expulsion known as *pabbājaniyakamma.*[3] This, perhaps, was also indirect disapproval of the action of the king and the generals.

But Mahātissa's disciple, Bahalamassu-Tissa—"Big-bearded Tissa"[4]—did not agree that the charge was justifiable, and raised objection. Thereupon the Mahāvihāra charged him also with having sided with the "impure" and imposed upon him the act of *ukkhepaniya* according to the *Vinaya.*[5] "Big-bearded Tissa" was very angry, and with a large following of monks

1. Mhv. xxxiii, 76–77.

2. *Ibid.* xxxiii, 82.

3. Mhv. xxxiii, 95; Nks. p. 10. For *pabbājaniyakamma*, see Clvg. p. 17 ff. Evidently there was no difficulty of instituting a charge of this nature against Mahātissa. For he seems to have been a man of sociable character and friendly disposition towards lay people, being intimate with them. He was endowed with a great deal of common sense and worldly wisdom.

4. Nks. p. 10, Mahadāḷiyā-Tissa.

5. For *ukkhepaniyakamma*, see Clvg. p. 36 ff.

went to the Abhayagiri and resided there refusing to return to the Mahāvihāra.[1]

This was the beginning of dissensions in the Saṅgha which had till then been united under the influence of the Mahāvihāra. Although the monks of the Abhayagiri lived as a separate group from the Mahāvihāra, there was no difference between the two at the beginning, either in theory or in practice, except that the Abhayagiri monks did not agree that the charge against Mahātissa was justifiable according to the *Vinaya*.

Soon afterwards, however, some monks, disciples of a teacher called Dhammaruci belonging to the Vajjiputra sect in India, came to Ceylon and were received at the Abhayagiri.[2] One can understand that the Abhayagiri, now separated from the powerful Mahāvihāra, desired to win some allies to strengthen their position. Some of the teachings and interpretations of the Vajjiputra sect were not in agreement with those of the Theriya sect which was the Mahāvihāra. We learn from Buddhaghosa that the Vajjiputtakas held, among other views, that there is a persisting personal entity, which is absolutely against the accepted theory of *anatta* of the Theravāda. They also held that an arahant may fall away. In spite of these opposite views, Buddhaghosa admits that the Vajjiputtakas were a Buddhist sect.[3]

Tissa and his followers liked the new monks and their teachings, and thenceforward the monks of the Abhayagiri were known as the Dhammaruci sect, after the name of the great teacher in India.[4] There was no official suppression of the new sect or their views, evidently because the king was in their favour.

1. Mhv. xxxiii, 96 ; Nks. p. 10.

2. Nks. p. 10.

3. *Ke pana puggalavādino? Sāsane Vajjiputtakā ceva Sammitiyā ca, bahiddhā bahū aññatitthiyā.* PañcaA. I, (*Kathāvatthuvaṇṇanā*), p. 85. *Sammitiyā Vajjiputtakā Sabbatthivādino ekacceca Mahāsaṅghikā arahatopi parihāniṃ icchanti. Ibid.* p. 104. We are not quite certain whether these views were held also by the disciples of Dhammaruci who were received at the Abhayagiri.

4. According to Nks. p. 10, this new sect came into being "in the 15th year of Vaṭṭagāmaṇī."

From this time onwards the Abhayagiri monks seem to have kept up constant contact with various Buddhist sects and new movements in India, from which they derived inspiration and strength. They were liberal in their views, and always welcoming new ideas from abroad they tried to be progressive. They studied both Theravāda and Mahāyāna and "widely diffused the Tripiṭakas."[1] The Mahāvihara, on the other hand, remained conservative, studied only the Theravāda, was opposed to the Mahāyāna, and discouraged any kind of innovation. It was faithful to the very letter of the orthodox teachings and traditions accepted by the Theravādins. The Abhayagiri monks, therefore, appeared in the eyes of the Mahāvihāra to be unorthodox and heretic.

The Mahāvihāra was the original and first centre of Buddhism, hallowed by Mahinda himself ; its monks were proud of the great traditions, and jealously guarded the honour and authority of their Vihāra. They had enjoyed the undivided regard and respect, loyalty and support of the state and the public, and did not like new elements entering the field to share their privileges and dividing the attention. But it was not possible to suppress new developments, which were the natural outcome of various changes, social, political and economic. The dissensions in the Saṅgha were by no means a symptom of decay and degeneration, but a sign of movement and progress.

The following period of about three centuries was attended with the usual vicissitudes of history. Vaṭṭagāmaṇī's son Coranāga (3 B.C.-9 A.C.) was hostile to the Saṅgha and destroyed eighteen vihāras where he had not been given refuge during the days of his rebellion against his cousin Mahācūlika Mahātissa (17–3 B.C.).[2] The damage done by him to the cause of Buddhism was so great that the author of the *Mahāvaṃsa* was convinced that "the evil-doer was reborn in Lokantarika-hell."[3]

The idea of study as a particular vocation for monks is mentioned for the first time in the *Mahāvaṃsa* during the reign

1. Hiuen Tsiang, II, p. 247.
2. Mhv. xxxiv, 11–13.
3. *Ibid.* xxxiv, 14.

of king Bhātikābhaya (38-66 A.C.). It is specially stated that he supplied requisites for bhikkhus engaged in *gantha-dhura* "occupation with books", that is, study. The reference here is most probably to teachers and students. Bhātikābhaya is reported to have held twenty-eight Vesak festivals,[1] evidently following the tradition set up by Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī.

It was also during this time that the famous festival of Giribhaṇḍa-pūjā[2] was originated by Bhātikābhaya's successor, Mahādāṭhika Mahānāga (67-79 A.C.), a king religious and pious to a fault,[3] who did a great deal to spread the dhamma and further the cause of Buddhism. His son, Āmaṇḍagāmaṇī (79-89 A.C.) was the first to issue the order of *māghāta* or non-killing of animals all over the Island,[4] most probably following the example of Asoka.

His brother and successor, Kaṇirajānu-Tissa (89-92 A.C.), ordered about sixty bad monks to be thrown down the precipice of a rock in Cetiya-pabba (Mihintalē). They had not accepted his decision in a case regarding some monastic dispute, and plotted to kill the king within the *uposatha* house itself.[5] This drastic action reveals some of the unrecorded events in the life of some monks of the day. There is no doubt that such incidents

1. Mhv. xxxiv, 59,66.

2. *Ibid.* xxxiv, 81. See below Ch. xvi (Ceremonies and Festivals).

3. He gave himself and his queen, his two sons, his state-elephant and his state-horse to the Saṅgha, although the Saṅgha forbade him. (Mhv. xxxiv, 86.)

4. Mhv. xxxv, 6.

5. Mhv. xxxv, 10–11; MṬ. p. 640. Adikaram says this punishment was "meted out to some bhikkhus for taking part in a political strife". (EHBC. p. 89.) It was not a political strife, but a dispute among the Saṅgha in the *uposatha* house or connected with the *uposatha* house (*uposathagharaṭṭaṃ*). MṬ. clearly says: *Cetiyagirivihāre uposathāgāra bhikkhusu uppannaṃ aṭṭaṃ* "a dispute arisen among the bhikkhus at the *uposatha* house in Cetiyagiri-vihāra". The king intervened and settled this dispute. (See also above, p. 67.) But a section of the monks, displeased with the king's decision, plotted to kill him within the *uposatha* house itself. Punishment was meted out to them for the plot to kill the king (*rājāparādha-kamma*). Geiger (Mhv. tr. 247, n. 1) thought the word *cetiyavhaye* (Mhv. xxxv, 10) referred to the Thūpārāma. But MṬ. p. 640 clearly says it is Cetiyagiri-vihāra (Mihintalē). Geiger thought further that the monks were "flung into the caves called Kaṇira". They were thrown down a precipice at Mihintalē.

as this considerably damaged the prestige of the Saṅgha. It may have been due to such reasons that we find kings now and then prejudiced in favour of or against a particular monastery. One holy man might win the royal favour for a monastery for a long time, while an evil-doer might lose it for an equally long period.

After the unfortunate incident referred to above, for a period of about three-and-a-half decades, no king seems to have paid any attention to Cetiya-giri till Vasabha (127-171 A.C.) effected some improvements there.[1] His action too was prompted by selfishness for it was undertaken, on the advice of the Saṅgha, to lengthen his life. He seems to have patronized all vihāras impartially, and he did a great deal to further the cause of Buddhism by providing for the preachers of dhamma and building new cetiyas and images and repairing old monasteries. Vihāras were built even in Nāgadīpa (now the Jaffna peninsula) in the north during the reign of this king.[2] He is said to have celebrated forty-four Vesak festivals. He also improved the civic, economic and health conditions of the country. Between the reigns of Vasabha and Vohārika-Tissa of 269-291 A.C., for about a century, nothing of importance in the history of Buddhism seems to have taken place. Almost all the kings supported the vihāras of either sect and did what they could to promote the cause of Buddhism.

During the time of Vohārika-Tissa, for the first time in the history of Ceylon, we hear of a new school of thought known as *Vetullavāda* (Skt. *Vaitulyavāda*). The king who supported the two great vihāras—Mahāvihāra and Abhayagiri[3]—is said to have suppressed *Vaitulyavāda*, keeping heretics in check with the assistance of his minister Kapila,[4] who was evidently well versed both in the law of the Buddha and in that of the land.

It is not quite clear who these Vaitulyavādins were, who were considered even more heretical than the Dhammarucikas of the Abhayagiri. The chronicles offer no help at all. According to

1. Mhv. xxxv, 80.
2. See E.Z. IV, Vallipuram Gold Plate, p. 237.
3. Mhv. xxxvi, 31-33 ; Geiger tr. p. 258, n. 4.
4. *Ibid.* xxxvi, 41.

Buddhaghosa, Vetullakas were also called Mahāsuññavādī.[1] They held the docetic view that the Buddha, having been born in Tusita heaven, lives there and never comes down to the human world, and that it is only a created phantasmal form (*nimmita-rūpamattakaṃ*) and not the Buddha that appears among men. Both this created form, and Ānanda who learned from it,preached the dhamma ; the Buddha himself never preached.[2] Furthermore, according to this view, the Buddha as such does not take anything (*na Bhagavā kiñci paribhuñjati*), but pretends to accept offerings in order to be in conformity with the world (*lokānu-vattanatthaṃ*). Therefore, what is given to him bears no fruit because it is of no help (*nirupakārattā*).[3]

In the same manner they held that the Saṅgha, in the ultimate sense of the term, meant only the path-fruitions (*paramatthato maggaphalāneva saṅgho*), that there was no Saṅgha apart from the path-fruitions ; but "path-fruitions" do not accept anything. Therefore it is wrong to say that the Saṅgha accepts gifts *dakkhiṇaṃ paṭigaṇhāti*) or purifies gifts (*dakkhiṇaṃ visodheti*) or that the Saṅgha enjoys food or drink. So that, nothing can be given to the Saṅgha and nothing whatever given to the Order bears fruit.[4] They held also that sex-relations may be entered upon by any human pair by mutual consent.[5]

Whether those who are referred to in the *Mahāvaṃsa* as the Vetullas who had come to Ceylon in the third century A.C. actually held these views is not certain. The records are absolutely silent on the question of their teachings. The *Dīpavaṃsa*, the earlier chronicle, uses the term *Vitaṇḍavāda* in place of *Vetullavāda*[6] but offers no help in elucidating the significance of the term.

1. *Mahāsuññavādisaṅkhātānaṃ Vetullakānaṃ*, PancaA. p. 109.
2. *Ibid.* p. 193.
3. *Ibid.* p. 192.
4. *Ibid.* pp. 190–192.
5. *Ibid.* p. 209. *ekādhippāyo methuno dhammo paṭisevitabbo. Ekādhippāya* or common purpose, the commentary explains, may be either through compassion or sympathy, or through a solemn resolve made at a shrine after worshipping there with a woman, to be reborn together.
6. Dpv. xxii, 41, 42.

The Pāli commentaries[1] also occasionally refer to the Vitaṇḍavādins, evidently dissenting Buddhists holding unorthodox views with regard the the subtle points in the Dhamma, particularly the Abhidhamma. The Vitaṇḍavādins and the Theravādins both quote the same authorities and name the sūtras of the Tripiṭaka, in order to support their positions, the difference being only in the mode of their interpretation.

Referring to the Vaitulyans who came to Ceylon in the days of Vohārika-Tissa the *Nikāya-saṅgraha*[2] says that the monks of the Abhayagiri, who were known as Dhammarucikas, accepted and proclaimed as the teaching of the Buddha the *Vaitulya-piṭaka* composed by the heretic brāhmaṇas called Vaitulyas who had assumed the garb of bhikkhus in order to ruin Buddhism during the time of Asoka ; and that the monks of the Theriya-nikāya, having compared their doctrine with the dharma and the vinaya, rejected it as false teaching. The reference to the brāhmaṇas here suggests that *Vaitulya-piṭaka* that was brought to Ceylon was composed in Sanskrit, and we know that Mahāyāna sūtras are all in Sanskrit.

The term *Vaipulya* is commonly used as a designation for Mahāyāna sūtras[3] which are sometimes called *Vaitulya sūtras* as well. According to the *Abhidharma-samuccaya* of Asaṅga the three terms *Vaipulya, Vaidalya* and *Vaitulya* denote the same thing. *Vaipulya* is defined by him as *Bodhisattva-piṭaka.* (*Abhidharma-Samuccaya*, ed. Pradhan, Santiniketan, 1950, p. 79.) Both Kern and Paranavitana think that there is hardly any reason to question the identification of Vaitulyavādins with the Mahāyānists.[4]

Evidently the author of the *Mahāvaṃsa* did not have a particular Buddhist school in view when he used the word Vetulla but employed it to denote any sect of Mahāyānism that

1. VbhA. pp. 7 ,36, 223; MA. I, pp. 520, 549.
2. Nks. p. 11.
3. Kern : MIB. p. 4 ff.
4. CJSc. G. Vol. II, pp. 35–36.

represented dissenting views and new interpretations not acceptable to the Mahāvihāra.[1]

It is worthy of note that the periods in which the Vaitulyakas were active in Ceylon synchronized with the dates of some of the important developments in Mahāyānism in India. Thus the appearance of Vaitulyakas, for the first time in Ceylon during the days of Vohārika-Tissa, took place after the tremendous activities of Nāgārjuna, the great Mahāyāna master who flourished in India somewhere about the latter half of the second century A.C.[2] Although the Vaitulyakas or Mahāyānists as an organized body were suppressed by political authorities under the instructions of the Mahāvihāra, whenever these new elements were active in Ceylon their influence over the ideas and teachings of the Theravāda was persistent and irrepressible. As time went on Mahāyāna ideas and practices crept slowly into the Theravāda system and were accepted and incorporated into the orthodox teaching without question of their validity.

Vohārika-Tissa had not only to suppress the Vaitulyas, he had also to purify the Saṅgha as a whole. Buddhism seems to have been in a bad state and the Saṅgha was corrupt. The king is said to have paid three hundred thousand and freed many bhikkhus who were in debt.[3] Such a thing was unheard of in early days. Why and how the bhikkhus fell into debt is a problem. Was it due to any corrupting influence of the Vaitulyavāda? About two decades earlier, during the time of Kuḍḍanāga (248-249 A.C.), there was a famine known as Ekanālika and Kuḍḍanāga is reported during this period to have maintained five hundred monks at the Mahāpālī, the famous public refectory of the Saṅgha.[4] But what of the other monks? How did they live? Living on *piṇḍa-pāta* (alms-begging) was not easy during a famine. Could it be that some of the bhikkhus who did not get their food

1. Even today in Ceylon any Buddhist who holds new ideas against the accepted beliefs and practices is branded as a Vaitulya. The term Vetulla or Vaitulya literally means "dissenting" or "different" (secondary derivative form from *vi*+*tulya*).

2. HIL. II, p. 342.

3. Mhv. xxxvi, 39.

4. *Ibid.* xxxvi, 20.

either at the Mahāpālī or elsewhere had to maintain themselves even by falling into debt? Or could it be that some bhikkhus had to look after their helpless parents or close relations during the famine? Vohārika-Tissa is also said to have established alms-giving in all places over the Island where the *Ariyavaṃsa-sutta* was preached.[1] Now, the preaching of the *Ariyavaṃsa* was a sign that Buddhism was in an unsatisfactory state.[2]

Vohārika-Tissa also abolished the infliction of physical pain as penalty[3] and held a great Vesak festival;[4] he did much to further the cause of Buddhism.

His reign was followed by about four decades of uneventful history. We then enter the first half of the fourth century which, perhaps, is one of the most troubled periods in the annals of Buddhism in Ceylon.

1. Mhv. xxxvi, 38.
2. See below p. 268 ff.
3. Mhv. xxxvi, 28, *hiṃsāmuttaṃ vohāraṃ*.
4. *Ibid.* xxxvi, 40.

7.

YEARS OF DEVELOPMENT—II

The Vaitulyans, despite their suppression by Vohārika-Tissa, began to assert themselves again at the Abhayagiri in the days of Goṭhābhaya (309-322 A.C.) who forced his way to the throne. He acted in striking contrast to his predecessor, Siri Saṅghabodhi (307-309 A.C.) who, though unsuccessful as a ruler, was the exemplar of the true Buddhist life. Goṭhābhaya was a strong king, and did a great deal to improve the material conditions of Buddhism by providing an abundance of requisites for bhikkhus, repairing old monasteries, building new ones, and holding popular festivals such as the Vesākha pūjā.[1]

When the Dhammarucikas or the residents of the Abhayagiri accepted Vaitulyavāda, a mahāthera named Ussiliyā-Tissa, himself a leading monk at the Abhayagiri, wished to avoid the unpleasant consequences of a situation as had happened in the days of Vohārika-Tissa. He, therefore, left the place with about three hundred monks and lived at the Dakkhiṇāgiri, cut off from the Dhammaruci sect. One of this new group, a mahāthera named Sāgala, began to teach religion there ; and from that time a new sect, called Sāgaliya, came into existence at the Dakkhiṇāgiri.[2]

Goṭhābhaya held an inquiry, suppressed the Vaitulyakas, burnt their books and exiled sixty of their leaders from the

1. Mhv. xxxvi, 99–109.
2. Nks. p. 11.

Island. Some of the exiled monks left Ceylon and resided in Kāvīrapaṭṭana in the Chola country in south India.[1]

It was about this period that the activities of the Yogācāra school of Asaṅga and Vasubandhu became powerful in India, and mystic and magical practices began to be introduced into the Buddhist system.[2]

The Ceylon bhikkhus who were in exile in Kāveri became intimately connected with a powerful and able young monk named Saṅghamitra, who later became the champion of Mahāyānism in Ceylon. The *Mahāvaṃsa* describes him as one "who was versed in the teachings concerning the exorcism of spirits and so forth" (*bhūtavijjādikovido*)[3], which was quite in keeping with the trend of religious development in India at the time.

When Saṅghamitra heard of the pitiable plight of the exiled monks, he was greatly moved and came to Ceylon with the firm determination of spreading Mahāyanism in the Island. Goṭhābhaya, who was taken up with this learned foreigner, entrusted to him his two sons for their education. Saṅghamitra found a loyal and devoted pupil in Mahāsena, the younger prince, though the elder one, Jeṭṭha-Tissa, was not so tractable. When Jeṭṭha-Tissa (323-333 A.C.) ascended the throne after his father's death, Saṅghamitra left Ceylon in fear but returned to the Island again as soon as Mahāsena (334-362 A.C.) succeeded his brother.[4] This was the long-awaited opportunity for him to carry out the plan which he had had in mind for nearly forty years.

Mahāsena figures in Ceylon history not only as a strong and able king who did a great deal for the country, but also as a man who had the courage of his conviction to stand against the mighty authority of the Mahāvihāra, which no ruler ever before dared to attempt.

Saṅghamitra, who resided at the Abhayagiri, tried in vain to convert the Mahavihāra to Mahāyānism. Thereupon, he persuaded his pupil Mahāsena to issue an order forbidding the public to provide alms to the monks of the Mahāvihāra on pain

1. Mhv. xxxvi, 110–112; Nks. p. 11.
2. HIL. II, pp. 352, 354 ff, 355 n. 6.
3. Mhv. xxxvi, 113.
4. Mhv. xxxvi, 113–117; xxxvii, 1–2; Nks. pp. 11–12.

of a fine. The bhikkhus of the Theriya sect left Anurādhapura and went to Rohaṇa and Malaya, principalities which always stood firm by the Mahāvihāra. For nine years the Mahāvihāra was deserted ; Saṅghamitra, with the approval of the king and the help of a minister named Soṇa, demolished the seven-storeyed Lohapāsāda and many other buildings of the Mahāvihāra, and utilized their materials to erect new buildings at the Abhayagiri. The premises of the Mahāvihāra were ploughed and sown with beans. Meanwhile Cetiya-pabbata (Mihintalē) was occupied by the Dhammarucikas of the Abhayagiri.[1]

The whole country was violently shocked by the action of the king. The popularity of the Mahāvihāra was so great that public opinion turned against him. Even those closely connected with the king were full of resentment. Little had he realized the influence of the Mahāvihāra over the people. His most intimate friend, the minister Meghavaṇṇa-Abhaya fled to Malaya, raised an army, and declared war on the king. Mahāsena was thus brought to his senses and realized the gravity of the situation. The two old friends, the king and the minister, met in private conference; the king admitted his error and promised to restore the Mahāvihāra. Mutual apologies were exchanged and a happy reconciliation was brought about.[2]

1. Mhv. xxxvii, 3–16 ; xxxviii, 75 ; Nks. pp. 12–13. Geiger translates Mhv. xxxviii, 75, thus :

Mahāvihāre pāpena Mahāsenena nāsite,
Vasiṃsu Dhammarucikhā bhikkhū Cetiyapabbate—

"Dhammarucika bhikkhus dwelt (at that time) in the Mahāvihāra which had been destroyed by the ruthless Mahāsena", and carries the last word *Cetiyapabbate* over to the next verse to connect it with *Ambatthalaṃ*. In a footnote (Culv. tr. I, p. 37, f.n. 5) he says that the Dhammarucikas got possession of both vihāras, the Mahāvihāra and the Ambatthala-vihāra. But the Dhammarucikas never occupied the Mahāvihāra. They went to and occupied Mihintalē only when the Mahāvihāra was destroyed.

The correct translation of the above verse should be : "When the Mahāvihāra was destroyed by the wicked Mahāsena, the Dhammarucikas lived at Cetiyapabbata (Mihintalē)". This translation is supported by Nks. p. 13, which says : .... *vihāra bhūmiya sāvā uñdu vapuravāpīya. Ekala Bhagirivehera vāsi Dharmarucīhu gos Sāgiriyehi visūha* "... the premises of the vihāra were ploughed and sown with beans. Then the Dhammarucis of Bhagiri-vehera (Abhayagiri-vihāra) went and stayed at Sāgiriya (Cetiyagiri, i.e., Mihintalē)".

2. Mhv. xxxvii, 17–35.

XIV

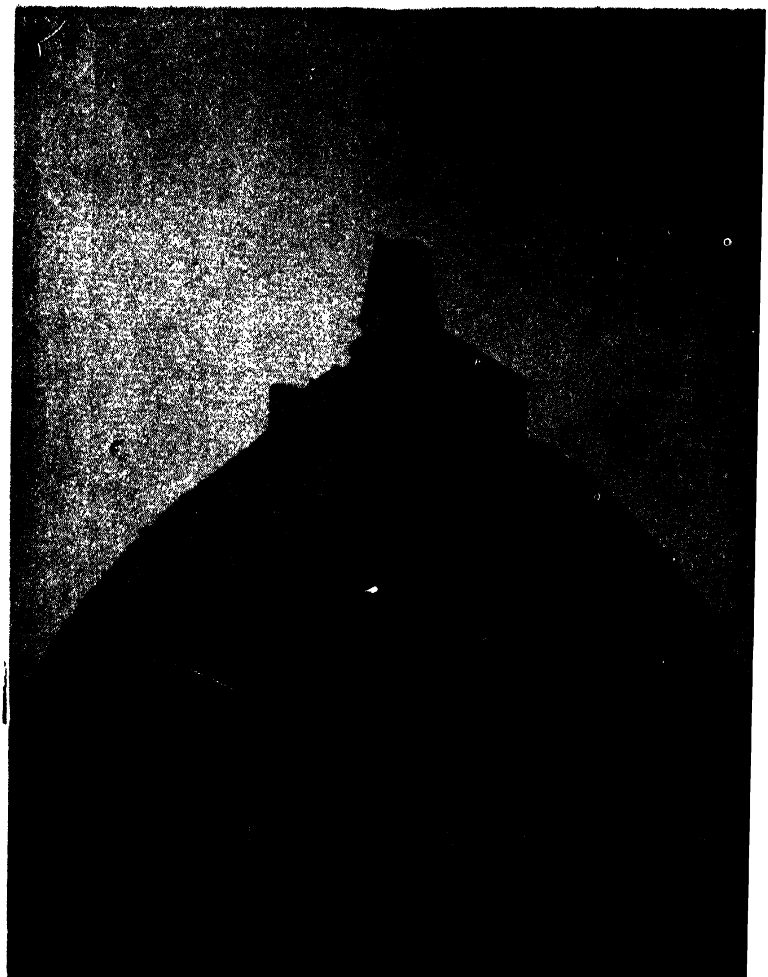


JETAVANA THŪPA, Anurādhapura (4th century A.C.)

(Reproduced from a seventeenth century drawing.)

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JETAVANA THŪPA as it is today.

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But the angry crowds had already taken a hand in retribution. One of the king's favourite wives, the daughter of a scribe,[1] in bitterness of heart had Saṅghamitra killed by a carpenter. Saṅghamitra's friend, the minister Soṇa, was also slain. The Mahāvihāra was restored chiefly by the good offices of the minister Meghavaṇṇa-Abhaya.[2]

Although agreeable to the suggestion of Meghavaṇṇa-Abhaya, the king was not in favour of the Mahāvihāra. He therefore built the great Jētavana within the boundaries of the Mahāvihāra, ignoring the strong protests of its authorities, and dedicated it to a thera named Tissa of the Dakkhiṇārāma or Dakkhiṇāgiri, a follower of the Sāgaliya sect. On account of this the Mahāvihāra was once again abandoned for nine months. Tissa Thera, who accepted the Jētavana-vihāra, was charged in the assembly of monks with having committed an offence of the gravest kind.[3] The Minister of Justice, who was regarded by the public as just and fair,[4] disrobed Tissa—even though it was against the wish of the king.[5]

1. Mhv. xxxvii, 26: *lekhaka-dhītikā*. But Nks. p. 13, says that she was the chief queen, daughter of a Lambakarṇa.

2. Mhv. xxxvii, 26–30; Nks. p. 13.

3. Mhv. xxxvii, 38, *antimavatthu*. One of the four *pārājikās*, namely: (i) murder; (ii) sexual intercourse; (iii) stealing; and (iv) pretending to possess superhuman qualities. We should remember here that Mahātissa who accepted the Abhayagiri had also been charged with an offence, but of another kind. It is interesting to note that anyone who accepts a vihāra against the wish of the Mahāvihāra is a bad monk and is accused of some offence. Mhv. xxxvii, 32, describes Tissa of Dakkhiṇārāma as "hypocrite, dishonest, evil-friend and unrestrained" (*kuhane jimhamānase pāpamitte asaññate*). Nks. p. 13, refers to him as *kohon* Tissa "the hypocrite Tissa". But an inscription found near the Eastern (Jetavana) Dāgäba at Anurādhapura, dated in the seventh year of Mahinda II (772–792 A.C.), refers to this thera as *Sāguli mahahimiyan namin pāḷavu apis satos Tis maha theranaṭ* "for the great elder Tis(Tissa) who was moderate and contented and was known by the name of the great Sāguli (Sāgala) Thera". (E.Z. III, p. 227.) The inscription was probably established by one who supported the Sāgaliya sect.

4. Mhv. xxxvii, 39, *vinicchaya-mahāmacco tadā dhammikasammato*. Probably this refers to Meghavaṇṇa-Abhaya himself. Evidently there was no other person powerful enough to do such a thing against the wish of the king. Nks. p. 14, takes his name to be Dhammika. It is a mistake. Cf. MṬ. p. 684, *dhammikoti sādhujanehi sambhāvito* "honoured by good people as just."

5. Mhv. xxxvii, 38–39.

Mahasena's power as the secular head of the religion was evidently weakened by his rash acts ; thus he had to submit to his minister Meghavaṇṇa-Abhaya on the previous occasion, and now a minister dared to ignore the king's wishes, and disrobed a monk whom the king had highly honoured. This was possible only because the Mahāvihara and public opinion were against the king.

Mahāsena was known even in contemporary India, perhaps because of his leanings towards Mahāyānism. The *Dāṭhāvaṃsa*[1] records that the Tooth Relic of the Buddha was sent to him from India for protection, but he was dead by the time it arrived in the Island.

Reference, for the first time, to an image of a Bodhisattva is found during this period, which is a clear proof of the Mahāyana influence that was powerful at the time. This "beautiful, charming figure, representing the Bodhisattva" was made on the order of his father[2] by Mahāsena's younger son Jeṭṭha-Tissa[3] who was famous as a carver in ivory.

Mahāsena was succeeded by his elder son, Sirimeghavaṇṇa, in 362 A.C. He apologized to the bhikkhus of the Mahāvihāra for all his father's ill-advised deeds, made ample amends for the damage done, and did everything in his power to win back the goodwill of the Mahāvihāra and the people. The diplomatic king had a golden statue of Mahinda made and inaugurated a mammoth festival and a procession lasting for several days to commemorate Mahinda's arrival. He invited to the festival both laymen and bhikkhus from all parts of the Island and decreed that succeeding kings should hold the festival annually. This great festival was evidently designed to drown the bitter memory of the evil days of the past.[4]

1. Dāṭhā, 301–302.
2. Mhv. xxxvii, 102.
3. Jeṭṭha-Tissa II (389–398 A.C.).
4. Mhv. xxxvii, 53–90.

In the ninth year of this king the left eye-tooth of the Buddha was brought to Ceylon from Dantapura in kalinga.[1] It was kept in a special building within the city and was taken annually to the Abhayagiri for public exhibition.[2]

It is remarkable that the Mahāvihāra should have had no part in the worship of the Tooth Relic which became the national palladium of the Sinhalese. The Abhayagiri was known in India, particularly during the days of Māhāsena, as a centre of Mahāyānism in Ceylon. The prince and the princess who brought the Tooth were, perhaps, themselves Mahāyānists, and thus probably first came in contact with the monks of the Abhayagiri sect.[3] The custodianship of the Tooth Relic thereby became the business of the Abhayagiri and not of the Mahāvihāra.[4]

Sirimeghavaṇṇa is also reported to have sent an embassy to Samudragupta of India and sought permission to build a monastery at Buddhagayā for Sinhalese pilgrims.[5]

The famous Chinese pilgrim Fa Hien came to Ceylon in the reign of Buddhadāsa (beginning of the 5th century A.C.) the well-known physician king, who provided extensive medical facilities for both man and beast.[6] He did a great deal to spread

1. Mhv. xxxvii 92 ; Dāṭhā. 340.
Percy Brown (*Indian Architecture*) says that "the holy city of Dantapura, the town of the Tooth, where this priceless possession was at one time deposited, lay in the vicinity of one of the neighbouring towns, either of Bhubanesvar or Pūri, although all traces of it are now lost. As a token of the antiquity of these parts, near at hand is Daulia hill, where is inscribed one of the rock edicts of Asoka," (p. 35). "This elevated position suggests that the Jagannāth temple occupies the site of some still more ancient monument, not improbably the shrine of the Buddha's tooth at Dantapura, before that precious relic was transported to Ceylon." (p. 123).

2. Mhv. xxxvii 95–97 ; Dāṭhā. 405–406 ; Fa Hien, pp. 106–107.

3. The Dāṭhā. says that they first divulged the secret to a bhikkhu in Meghagiri-vihāra in the north-west of the city of Anurādhapura, and the bhikkhu sent word to the king, vv. 346, 348, 352. J.R.A.S., C.B., 1963

4. See below pp. 128, 280 ff.

5. Geiger, Mhv. tr. Intro. xxxix.

6. Buddhadasa is supposed to have composed a compendium of medical treatises. Mhv. xxxvii 146, *sabbesaṃ vejjasatthānaṃ katvā Sāratthasaṅgahaṃ*.

the teaching of the Buddha by honouring the learned and fixing payments for the maintenance of preachers.[1]

It was during the time of this king that a great thera, popularly called Mahādhammakathī[2] translated the Pāli suttas for the first time into Sinhalese.[3] Perhaps he was the same as Ta-mo-kiu-ti "of great virtue" referred to by Fa Hien.[4] The Abhayagiri was flourishing at the time, most probably after Mahāsena's activities. According to Fa Hien, there were 5,000 monks at the Abhayagiri,[5] while there were only 3,000 at the Mahāvihāra.[6]

During the time of Buddhadāsa's son, Upatissa I, a new festival, called Gaṅgārohaṇa,[7] was inaugurated on the advice of the monks to overcome a famine which occurred early in the fifth century. It was decreed that the festival should be held whenever there was a famine.[8] Upatissa was very kind-hearted and extremely religious and it is said that as long as he lived he obtained his food from the Mahāpālī, the common refectory of the Sangha.[9]

His brother Mahānāma, (409-431 A.C.) who had been a bhikkhu, disrobed himself and ascended the throne after Upatissa had been killed by his queen. Mahānāma was favourable to the Abhayagiri,[10] while his queen was devoted to the Mahāvihāra.[11]

It was during the tine of Mahānāma that the great commentator Buddhaghosa came to Anurādhapura, and, residing at the Mahāvihāra, translated the Sinhalese commentaries on the Tripiṭaka into Pāli.[12]

1. *Dhamma-bhāṇaka-vaṭṭaṃ*, Mhv. xxxvii 150.
2. Perhaps his name was something else. Mahā-Dhammakathī means "the great preacher". In ancient days people often were known not by their proper names but by sone popular designations.
3. Mhv. xxxvii 175.
4. Fa Hien p. 107 ; see Geiger : Clv. tr. I, p. 16, n. 5.
5. Fa Hien, p. 102.
6. *Ibid.* p. 107.
7. See below p. 276.
8. Mhv. xxxvii 189–198.
9. *Ibid.* xxxvii 203.
10. Perhaps he was a monk at that monastery.
11. Mhv. xxxvii 212–213.
12. *Ibid.* xxxvii 243–244.

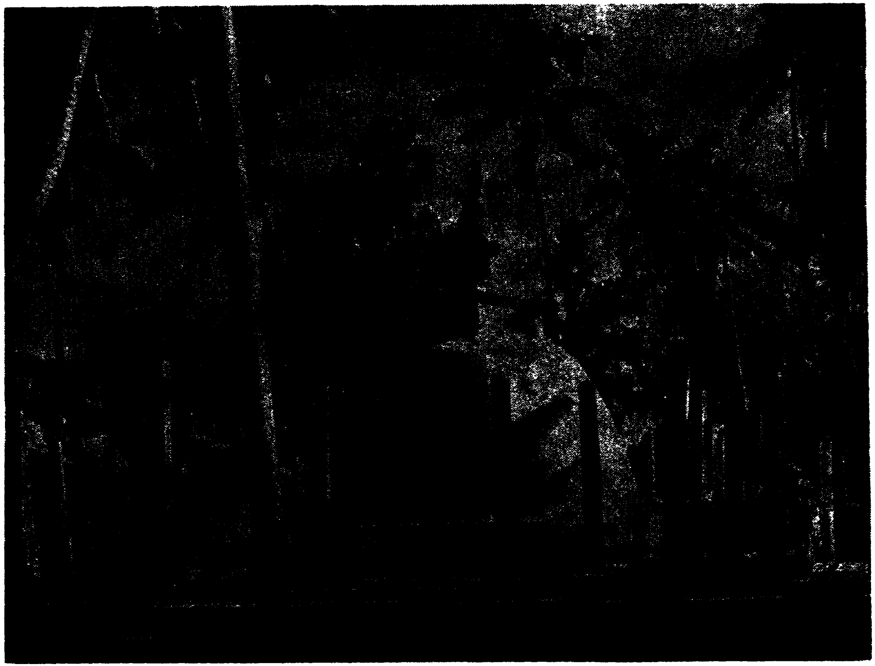


AMBATTHALA THŪPA, Mihintalē, where Mahinda met Devānampiya-Tissa.

(This is a reproduction of a drawing made in the 17th century A.C.)

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AMBATTHALA THŪPA, Mihintalē, as it is today.

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After Mahānāma, the country was in chaos for more than twenty-five years. Six Tamil usurpers ruled in succession at Anurādhapura. The whole Island was ravaged, and the religious as well as the cultural and economic progress of the nation was obstructed. Many Sinhalese families fled to Rohaṇa, while there were some influential Sinhalese who served the Tamils.[1]

Dhātusena (460–478 A.C.) was the hero of the day, and liberated the country from foreign rule. He was originally a bhikkhu and was brought up and educated by a learned thera who was his uncle.[2] Dhātusena gave up his robes, killed the Tamils, and re-established the Sinhalese rule. He did a great deal to promote Buddhism as well as the welfare of the country. Among his works the vast irrigation tank of Kalāvāva must be mentioned.[3]

He was a staunch supporter of the Mahāvihāra and built eighteen great vihāras and tanks and offered them to the monks of the Theriya sect. Many smaller vihāras and tanks built by him were also made over to the same sect. He provided abundance of requisites for bhikkhus and gave every encouragement for the spread of the teaching of the Tripiṭaka.[4]

Though he was a loyal friend of the Mahāvihāra, he did not forget to make necessary improvements at the Abhayagiri.[5] He also renovated the Ambatthala-vihāra on the Cetiya-pabbata (Mihintalē) with the idea of giving it to the Theriyas, but on the entreaty of the Dhammarucikas who were in occupation of the hill since the days of Mahāsena, the vihāra was granted to their sect.[6]

Dhātusena made several statues of the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas and built houses for them.[7] He made an image of Mahinda and held a great festival at the cremation ground of the thera where, it is said, the *Dīpavaṃsa* was recited and explained.[8]

1. Mhv. xxxviii 12, 38.
2. *Ibid.* xxxviii 14–17.
3. *Ibid.* xxxviii 42.
4. *Ibid.* xxxviii 44–51.
5. *Ibid.* xxxviii 61.
6. *Ibid.* xxxviii 75–76.
7. *Ibid.* xxxviii 61–62 ; 65–68 ; 78.
8. *Ibid.* xxxviii 58–59.

Dhātusena was succeeded by his patricide son Kassapa I (478-496 A.C.) of Sīgiriya fame. His brother Moggallāna, whose life was not safe in Ceylon under Kassapa's regime, fled to India.[1] At first the bhikkhus of the Theriya sect were not favourable to Kassapa, chiefly through fear of public censure. They refused to accept his offer of the Issarasamaṇārāma[2] which was enlarged and enriched with new endowments by Kassapa ; but later on they yielded and allowed it to be offered to the image of the Buddha, thus accepting it indirectly.[3] Kassapa built a Vihāra for the Dhammarucikas as well.[4]

Not only the bhikkhus but also the nigaṇṭhas in the Island were disappointed with Kassapa. It was the nigaṇṭhas who served as spies for Moggallāna and informed him of the opportune moment for him to arrive in Ceylon.[5]

Moggallāna I (496-513 A.C.) landed in Ceylon with some friends from India, collected his army in a vihāra named Kuṭhāri,[6] defeated kassapa and ascended the throne. He was a favourite of all bhikkhus, irrespective of sect. After his victory he went to both vihāras to pay homage to the Sangha.[7] The bhikkhus at the Mahāvihāra, having cleansed the place, clothed themselves in their robes, and stood in order of rank to receive the new king. Moggallāna, leaving the great army outside the elephant wall (*hatthipākāra*), entered the vihāra, and having worshipped the Sangha, offered them as a mark of homage and gratitude the state-parasol, which was duly returned back to him.[8]

An important event that took place during Moggallana's time was the bringing to Ceylon of the Kesadhātu, the Hair Relic of

1. Mhv. xxxix 1–2.
2. The so-called Vessagiriya, near Anurādhapura. See above p. 58, n. 7.
3. Mhv. xxxix 10–13.
4. *Ibid.* xxxix 15.
5. *Ibid.* xxxix 20–21. Perhaps, These nigaṇṭhas had been sent by Moggallāna himself from India particularly for this purpose. The employment of spies in the guise of religious mendicants and ascetics was a common practice in ancient days. (See Manu. p. 256).
6. Mhv. xxxix 21.
7. *Ibid.* xxxix 33.
8. *Ibid.* xxxix 41–43.

the Buddha from India. A young man named Silākāla, one of the royalties that had fled to India during the evil days of Kassapa became a bhikkhu at Buddhagayā.[1] It was this Silākāla, nicknamed Ambasāmaṇera that brought the Kesadhātu here. He was highly honoured by the king, and was the first to receive the great title of Asiggāha, Sword-bearer, which created, for the occasion, later became a distinguished office of State. The king's sister was given in marriage to Silākāla. The Hair Relic was placed in a crystal casket in an image house, and the occasion was celebrated with a great festival.[2] Moggallāna also purified the Sāsana[3] which was disorganized during the troublesome days of his brother Kassapa.

Moggallāna was succeeded by his son, Kumāra-Dhātusena (513-522 A.C.), who is said to have held a *dhammasaṅgīti*, or "recital of the sacred texts" and purified the Sāsana.[4] What was the necessity to hold a Council and "purifiy the *Sāsana*" immediately after Moggallāna's work on the same lines? The nature of Kumāra-Dhātusena's *saṅgīti* and purification is not known. A *saṅgīti* was held in earlier times in order to decide upon the genuine teachings of the Buddha. But if the Texts were fixed by the Commentaries in the 5th century, what useful purpose could a *saṅgīti* have served in the sixth century? Was it only a grand recitation of the Tripiṭaka to encourage the learning of the dhamma among the people?[5]

After about ten years of political troubles and assassinations of rulers one after another we come to the reign of Silākāla (524-537 A.C.), the ex-Buddhist monk referred to above. He decreed the order of non-killing, *māghāta*, over the Island,[6] maintained hospitals,[7] and carried on the usual religious activities.

1. Most probably at the monastery built by Sirimeghavaṇṇa with the permission of Samudragupta.

2. Mhv. xxxix 44–56. The *Mahāvaṃsa* says that the story of the Hair-Relic is related in detail in a book called *Kesadhātuvaṃsa* which is not yet found. (Mhv. xxxix 49, 56).

3. Mhv. xxxix 57.

4. *Ibid.* xli 1–2.

5. Dalla-Moggallāna also is reported to have held a recitation of the Piṭakas (*piṭakānañ ca sajjhāyaṃ*) (Mhv. xliv 46). This also may be something of that nature.

6. Mhv. xli 30.

7. *Ibid.* xli 28.

In the twelfth year of this king, a young merchant named Pūrṇa, who went on business to Kāsi (Benares) brought to Ceylon a book called *Dharmadhātu*.[1] Silākāla—who most probably had contact with Mahāyānists in India during the days of his early exile in that country—received this book with great honour and respect, housed it near the palace, and took it over to the Jetavanavihāra once a year for a festival which he made into a regular, annual event. The Sāgaliya monks of the Dakkhiṇāgiri who lived at the Jetavana at the time, were loth to join in these activities because they were aware of the treatment meted out to the Vaitulyas in the past by some kings. But the monks of the Abhayagiri persuaded them to honour the *Dharmadhātu*. The Mahāvihāra and some of the citizens of Anurādhapura dissociated themselves altogether from these proceedings.[2]

We find a great movement for the spread of the dhamma and the promotion of learning during the reign of the celebrated poet-king Culla-Moggallāna or Moggallāna II (537-556 A.C.). Rewarding the preachers by abundant gifts of honour, he had the Tripiṭaka preached along with the Commentaries. He also made arrangements for the books to be written down. He himself composed a religious poem (*dhamma-kabbaṃ*) and seated on the back of his elephant, recited it at the end of a sermon in the city at night. He was so anxious to disseminate learning that it is recorded that he lured children with sweetmeats to study the dhamma.[3]

After the lapse of a few years of political and other vicissitudes of little consequence, we come to Aggabodhi I (568-601 A.C.), during whose reign, it is said, some twelve great poets composed many poems in Sinhalese.[4] This king, after spending about nine

1. What the contents of the *Dharmadhātu* were we are not certain. But Paranavitana says : "There is hardly any doubt that the Vaitulya sūtra introduced to Ceylon from Benares in Silākāla's reign was a treatise dealing with the doctrine of the three bodies of the Buddha." (CJSc. G. Vol. II, p. 38).

2. Mhv. xli 37–40 ; Nks. pp. 14–15.

3. Mhv. xli 58–60 ; 62.

4. Mhv. Xlii 13 ; Nks. p. 15.

years in suppressing the enemies both of state and religion,[1] did some good work under the instruction of his adviser called Dāṭhāsiva Mahāthera.[2]

A very important incident is reported to have occurred during his reign. A great thera, named Jotipāla, who came from India, defeated the Vaitulyas in the Island in a public controversy. An *ādipāda* (*āpā*) called Dāṭhāpabhuti, who was a strong supporter of the Vaitulyas, smarting under the defeat, raised his hand in anger to strike the thera. But the king was highly pleased with Jotipāla and requested him to stay at the same vihāra.[3] The *Nikāyasangraha* says that after this public defeat there were no more converts to the Vaitulya doctrine, and the monks of the two nikāyas, namely, the Abhayagiri and the Jetavana, dismissed pride and lived in submission to the Mahāvihāra.[4]

We can understand and appreciate this incident better if we remember that at this time in India, whence Jotipāla hailed, much importance was given to the study of logic and public disputations on religious topics after the great activities of the celebrated Buddhist logicians Diṅnāga and Dharmakīrti.[5] It would not have been a difficult task for Jotipāla, who had been in touch with the latest theories of Buddhist thought in India, to have defeated the monks of Ceylon who had little opportunity of knowing current developments on the continent.

Despite this public defeat of the Vaitulyas, the next king Aggabodhi II (601-611 A.C.) did more for the Abhayagiri and the Jetavana than for the Mahāvihāra. His queen too was in sympathy with the Abhayagiri.[6] In fact Aggabodhi II does not seem to have taken interest in the Mahāvihāra. For example, when the great thera Jotipāla once showed him that a part of the Thūpārāma Dāgäba had come loose and fallen down when the thera was worshipping there, the king expressed some concern

1. Mhv. xlii 14.
2. *Ibid.* xlii 14–34.
3. Mhv. xlii 35–37 ; Nks. p. 15 ; the Nks. places this controversy during the reign of Silākāla, probably a mistake.
4. Nks. p. 15.
5. HIL. II, p. 362 ff. ; HBT. p. 245.
6. Mhv. xlii 63–66.

and removed the Collar-bone Relic to Lohapāsāda, but delayed the repairs. It was only after "threats of dreadful dreams" that the king completed the work on the dāgāba.[1] He built Veluvana-vihāra for the monks of the Sāgaliya sect.[2] For the second time in history we find the order of Asiggāha conferred by this king on a relation of his queen.[3]

During the time of Aggabodhi II the king of Kalinga, on account of some political trouble there, came to Ceylon and became a monk under Jotipāla thera. His queen and his minister followed him to Ceylon and themselves entered the Order. Aggabodhi and his queen did everything to make their stay in the Island as happy as possible. The royal thera died in Ceylon.[4]

After this, for about half a century, the country was in constant trouble, both political and religious. From about this time onwards kings mostly did repairs to old religious buildings made grants to monasteries, held popular festivals, and tried to "purify the *Sāsana*".

What is meant by the purification (*sodhana*) of the *Sāsana* (religion) at this time is quite clear. It is invariably stated that the purification was carried out by *dhamma-kamma*,[5] a regulative act of the *Vinaya*. The act of purification was performed by the Sangha on the orders of the king. It may be that the majority of bhikkhus were changing with the times and this was regarded as "corruption" by the more conservative elements in the Sangha. Throughout history we find kings and prelates attempting unsuccessfully to stem the current of natural progress which they regarded as degrading corruption.

Dalla-Moggallāna, or Moggallāna III (611-617 A.C.) held a grand recital of the three Pitakas (*piṭakānañca sajjhāyaṃ*) and encouraged the spread of religious knowledge by honouring the

1. Mhv. xlii 51–56.

2. *Ibid.* xlii 43. Geiger thinks that this Veluvana-vihāra may be somewhere between Anurādhapura and Manihīra (Minnēriya). (Clv. tr. I, p. 77, n. 2).

3. Mhv. xlii 42.

4. *Ibid.* xlii 44–50.

5. Mhv. xxxix 57 ; xliv 46, 76 ; li 64. For *dhammakamma* and *adhamma kamma* see Clvg. *Kammakkhandhaka.*

learned.[1] A reference to a *kaṭhina*-ceremony is found in the reign of this king.[2] He too purified the *sāsana*.[3]

During the reign of his successor, Silāmeghavaṇṇa (617-626 A.C.), a great disturbance took place at the abhayagiri. A monk, called Bodhi, residing at the abhayagiri, made a complaint to the king against the undisciplined behaviour of many monks in that vihāra, and requested the king to hold a *dhamma-kamma*, regulative act. The king authorized Bodhi himself to carry out the purification. All the undisciplined monks (*dussīlā*) got together and killed Bodhi, thus annulling the act. The king was furious and had the hands of the criminals cut off, put them in fetters and made them watchers of bathing tanks. Further, he exiled a hundred monks and ultimately "purified the Sāsana". After this the king was anxious to bring about a settlement between the two vihāras, and requested the monks of the Theriya sect to hold the *uposatha*-ceremony together with those of the Abhayagiri. But the Mahāvihāra refused to comply with the request.[4]

During the next ten or fifteen years the country was practically ruined by civil wars between rulers. All the rich monasteries such as the Mahāvihāra and the Abhaygiri were plundered; cetiyas like the Thūpārāma were broken into and treasures removed ; golden images, pinnacles and other valuables belonging to the monasteries were plundered and sold in order to maintain the armies of different rebels.[5]

When Kassapa II (641-650 A.C.) ascended the throne after these troubles, he repaired the buildings that had been destroyed and performed many religious activities to make up for his evil actions in the past.[6] He arranged for monks to go about and preach the dhamma,[7] and caused a compendium (*saṅgaha*) of the

1. Mhv. xliv 47.
2. *Ibid.* xliv 48. For *kaṭhina*, see below p. 285.
3. *Ibid.* xliv 46.
4. *Ibid.* xliv 75–80.
5. *Ibid.* xliv 130–140
6. *Ibid.* xliv 146.
7. *Ibid.* xliv 148.

Pāli texts to be composed.[1] He also had the Abhidhamma recited along with the commentaries.[2]

This new interest in the Abhidhamma was becoming an outstanding feature of the intellectual class of the period. Hiuen Tsiang records that in India the learned monks were very highly honoured at this time,[3] and also the Sinhalese monks "were distinguished for their power of abstraction and their wisdom".[4] Therefore, in keeping with the spirit of the age, Jeṭṭhatissa III, before he went to the war in which he met with his death, asked his general to request his queen to study the Abhidhamma, preach it and transfer its merits to him.[5] Mahinda II, too, had the Abhidhamma preached on an elaborate scale.[6]

In Dāṭhopatissa II's time (650-658 A.C.) there was again some friction between the king and the Mahāvihāra. Dāṭhopatissa wanted to build a vihāra for the Abhayagiri, but the Mahāvihāra raised objection on the ground that it was within their boundaries. But the king forcibly carried out his plan. The monks of the Theriya sect were bitter against the king and applied to him the *patta-nikkujjana-kamma* "the turning down of the alms-bowl",[7] which is considered the excommunication of a layman. But the king did nothing against the Mahāvihāra.

1. Mhv. xlv 3.
2. *Ibid.* xliv 150.
3. Hiuen Tsiang I, p. 81.
4. *Ibid.* II, p. 247.
5. Mhv. xliv 109.
6. *Ibid.* xlviii 141.
7. Mhv. xlv 29–31. Bhikkhus go with their alms-bowls upright and turn them down in front of the house of the layman in question. This act symbolizes the idea that nothing from that layman will be accepted by the Sangha. This religious sanction which is regarded as a great insult is meted out to a layman who dishonours the Sangha or who tries to lessen its income (Mhv. xlv 32–34). But according to the Clvg. pp. 217 ff. the act of *pattanikkujjana* should be performed by an assembly of the Sangha by reciting a particular formula. Perhaps the Mhv. account indicates how in the 7th century it was put into practice in a form visible to the general public, after performing the prescribed *Vinaya* act. The Clvg. lays down 8 reasons for which *pattanikkujjana* could be inflicted on a layman: attempt (1) to damage the income of bhikkhus, (2) to do some harm to bhikkhus, (3) to eject bhikkhus from a place, (4) to insult bhikkhus, (5) to bring disunity among bhikkhus, (6) to talk ill of the Buddha, (7) the Dhamma and (8) the sangha.

Next we come to a peaceful period in the reign of Aggabodhi IV (658-674 A.C.), the younger brother of Dāṭhopatissa II. On the instructions of his adviser, a mahāthera named Dāṭhāsiva, he made ample amends for all the injustices done to the monasteries by his kinsmen in the past. All the three nikāyas received his favour. Maintenance-villages, servants and attendants and all other comforts were provided for them. "To the three fraternities he gave a thousand villages with large and assured revenues."[1]

The whole country followed the example of the king. Even the Tamils who were high officers in the king's service followed the king in religious activities. The queen built a nunnery for bhikkunis and provided all comforts for them.[2]

For the first time we have a reference during the reign of Aggabodhi IV to the chanting of *paritta* (Sin. *pirit*) as a ceremony,[3] which became a regular feature of later Buddhist practices. He also proclaimed the Order of *māghāta* (non-killing).[4] After this we notice a new spirit of regard for animal life beginning to influence the minds of the people. Kassapa III (711-724 A.C.) decreed not only the order of *māghāta*, but also reared fish in two fords (*macchatitthe duve*).[5] Mahinda II (772-792 A.C.) and Sena I (831-851 A.C.) are reported to have made provision for fishes, beasts and birds (*macchānaṃ migapakkhīnaṃ*), while Udaya I (Dappula II) (792-797 A.C.) is said to have given corn to cattle and rice to crows and other birds.[6]

1. Mhv. xlvi 6–16.
2. *Ibid.* xlvi 19–27.
3. *Ibid.* xlvi 5.
4. *Ibid.* xlvi 3.
5. Mhv. xlvi 24. Geiger, without translating the word, refers the reader to Wickremasingha, E.Z. I, 216, 221, 227, who takes *macchatitthas* to be some monasteries known by that name. This, evidently, is a mistake. Rearing fish in fords as a matter of kindness is a common practice even today in the Sinhalese villages, and is perhaps a continuation of the old custom. Buddhist villagers feed the fish with rice and other eatables, particularly on poya days. Killing a fish reared in this manner earns the strong resentment of the people. For example, recently a man who killed a fish in such a ford at the village of Kanankē in the Väligam Kōraḷē in the Southern Province of Ceylon, had to pay a compensatory fine of Rs. 10 to the Buddhist vihāra in the village to escape further consequences.
6. Mhv. xlviii 97 ; xlix 36 ; 13.

Pulatthipura or Polonnaruva, which succeeded Anurādhapura as the capital of Ceylon, was growing in importance at this time, both on account of its strategic position against invasions and on account of its prosperity helped by extensive irrigation works in the neighbourhood. Anurādhapura was growing old and becoming more of a holy city than the seat of government. Aggabodhi IV (658-674 A.C.) was the first king to occupy Polonnaruva temporarily; he died there unexpectedly of a sudden illness. He was so good and religious that his ashes were used by the people as medicine.[1]

As a reaction, perhaps, against the exceedingly comfortable life of monks, and also as an attempt to revive the old religious life, ascetic monks known as paṃsukūlikas came into prominence at the time of Mānavamma (676–711 A.C.).[2] They seemed to have originally belonged to the Abhayagiri, and separated from it as a special group only about a century and a half later.[3] The paṃsukūlikas at once became popular, and we find kings extending their patronage to them.[4] Aggabodhi V (711-717 A.C.) is reported to have given even the fine garments worn by himself to the paṃsukūlika monks for robes.[5]

We hear again of a "purification of the Sāsana" by Aggabodhi VII (766-772 A.C.) who supported the paṃsukūlikas as well as monks of all three fraternities.[6] At this time Polonnaruva was becoming more and more important and this king was the first to occupy it as his capital.[7]

Later, in the Polonnaruva period, we find a great deal of Hindu influence over Buddhist practices; the beginnings of these are noticed about this time. For example, Mahinda II

1. Mhv. xlvi 34–37.

2. Mhv. xlvii 66. Monks who observed the *paṃsukūlikaṅga*, first of the thirteen *dhutaṅgas*, are called *paṃsukūlikas*. They make their robes out of the rags thrown away by the people. See Vsm. p. 45 ff. *paṃsukūlikas* are referred to as far back as the 1st century B.C.

3. Mhv. li 52.

4. *Ibid.* xlvii 66 ; xlviii 4, 16 ; xlix 80 ; l 63, 76 ; li 52.

5. *Ibid.* xlviii 16.

6. *Ibid.* xlviii 71, 72.

7. *Ibid.* xlviii 74.

(772-792 A.C.) "restored many dilapidated temples of gods (*devakula*) here and there and had costly images of the gods made, and also he gave the brāhmanas delicious foods such as the king receives, and gave them milk with sugar to drink in golden goblets."[1] Earlier in the century another king[2] is said to have provided for brāhmaṇas.

From now on for a period of nearly a century the records contain nothing worthy of particular mention, except that the queen of Udaya I (Dappula II) (792–797 A.C.) built a nunnery for bhikkhunīs.[3] Repairing and restoring old religious buildings, holding festivals, providing requisites for monks were the usual activities of kings.

We come again to an important period during the reign of Sena I (831-851 A.C.),[4] when a member of the Vajraparvata sect[5] in India came to Ceylon and spread Vājiriyavāda or Vajrayāna in the Island while residing at the Vīrāṅkura-ārāma in the Abhayagiri.[6] The *Nikāya-saṅgraha* says that King Matvala-Sen rejected such powerful sutras as the *Ratana-sutta* and accepted the secret teachings of the Vājiriyavāda.[7] Further it says that from the time of Matvala-Sen the Vājiriyavāda was "prevalent among the foolish and ignorant people of this country because it was protected and practised secretly as a mystic teaching".

At this time the king of Pāṇḍya country invaded Ceylon with a large army, plundered the king's palace, towns and monasteries and carried away all their most cherished possessions including the golden images of the Buddha, and "caused the Island of Lankā to be deprived of her valuables, leaving the splendid town

1. Mhv. xlviii 143, 144.
2. Kassapa III, (717–724 A.C.) : Mhv. xlviii 23.
3. Mhv. xlix 25.
4. Nks. calls him Matvala-Sen.
5. Hitherto unidentified.
6. Mhv. l 68 ; Nks. p. 16.
7. Nks. p. 16. Vijrayāna is a system full of mystic practices. (See HIL. II, pp. 387 ff., 392 ff.). The titles of Vajrayāna books also convey the idea of mysticism such as *Māyājālamantra* and *Sarvaguhya* (Nks. p. 8). See also CJSc. G II, p. 38 ff.

in a state as if it had been plundered by yakkhas."[1] Sena I left Anurādhapura and spent his last days at Poḷonnaruva.[2]

His successor Sena II (851-885 A.C.), who ascended the throne at Poḷonnaruva, sent a Sinhalese army to invade the Pāṇḍya country. It defeated the king who plundered Ceylon, put on the throne a Pāṇḍyan prince and brought back all the treasures that had belonged to the Sinhalese. The whole Island was again united and prosperous under the able rule of Sena II.[3]

He restored old vihāras and monasteries, granted endowments liberally, held religious festivals, such as a grand *pirit* ceremony and a Vesak festival. He had images of the Buddha made and also of Bodhisattvas. He had the *Ratana-sutta* written on a gold plate and made offerings to it, which, perhaps, indicates the influence of Vājiriya-vāda referred to above. He also had a recital of the Abhidhamma.[4]

It was in the twentieth year of this king that the paṃsukūlikas separated from the Abhayagiri and formed themselves into a distinctive group.[5] The same king is also reported to have "purified" the three fraternities together,[6] after they were disorganized during the preceding period.

Buddhist and Hindu practices were coming closer together and Sena II "had a thousand jars of gold filled with pearls and on the top of each placed a costly jewel and presented them to a thousand brāhmaṇas whom he had fed with milk rice in jewelled goblets, and also he gave them golden threads. He clothed them also, as a friend of meritorious deeds, with new garments to their hearts' desire, and gladdened them with festive pomp."[7]

1. Mhv. l 33–36.

2. Mhv. l 50 ; Nks. p. 16 says :" because of his embracing these false doctrines he fled from the place he lived in, and giving up the city to the Tamils, went to Poḷonnaruva and died there."

3. Mhv. li 50.

4. *Ibid.* li 73–85.

5. *Ibid.* li 52.

6. *Ibid.* li 64.

7. *Ibid.* li 65–67.

By now Anurādhapura had lost its position as the seat of Government after nearly twelve centuries, its last king being Udaya II (885-896 A.C.) who succeeded Sena II.

The great Lohapāsāda, the nerve-centre of Buddhist activities in olden days, had now only 32 monks as residents, even after it was repaired and newly endowed by Sena II.[1] All interests and activities, both political and religious, were fast shifting into the new capital of Poḷonnaruva, now growing rapidly in importance and size.

1. Mhv. li 69–70.

8.

THE MONASTERY I: ITS STRUCTURE

Caves, found in such places as Mihintalē, Vessagiriya,[1] Situlpavva (Cittalapabbata), Riṭigala (Ariṭṭhapabbata) and Rājagala or Rāssahela in the Batticaloa District, provided shelter for the earliest Buddhist monks. Mahinda and other arahants spent their first *vas* retreat in Ceylon in the caves of Mihintalē.[2] The natural cave was utilized in early days as a residence for monks, partly because the building of houses was not an easy task.[3] But, in later times after large monasteries were built, a section of the monks with more religious devotion and a desire for austere practices preferred to live in caves on mountains and in jungles, as some do even to-day. Their predilection was probably due to the reason that the cave with its naked simplicity and solitude was generally regarded from the earliest times as an ideal abode for hermits who devoted their life to meditation.[4] Consequently the lay people considered the cave-dwelling monks to be more spiritually-minded and religious than the others. Hence the Commentary of the *Vibhaṅga*[5] records that a king named Tissa

1. Properly Issarasamaṇārāma. See above p. 58, n. 7.
2. See above p. 56.
3. See above p. 15.
4. The Buddha says in the Mahātaṇhāsaṅkhaya-sutta that a virtuous monk dwells in a cave (*giriguhaṃ*) (M. I, p. 271). The Master himself used to meditate in a cave named Indasālaguha on the Vedika mountain (D. II p. 162). (See also DPPN. I, p. 313). Pipphaliguhā, a cave near Rājagaha was a favourite haunt of Mahā-Kassapa (DPPN. II, p. 204). Tālapuṭa Thera expresses his great yearning to dwell alone in a cave (Thera. p. 316).
5. VbhA. p. 335.

was of opinion that the monks at Cetiyagiri (Mihintalē) were better than those at Anuradhapura.[1] Fa Hien refers to a "Śramaṇa of great virtue" who lived at Mihintalē early in the fifth century.[2] Buddhaghosa says that people regarded Dakkhiṇāgiri, Hatthikucchi, Cetiyagiri and Cittalapabbata as abodes of arahants.[3] Cūlanāga-lena of Tambapaṇṇi-dīpa was considered an ideal place for meditation.[4] Udumbaragiri (Dimbulāgala) was another popular place where many bhikkhus used to go for meditation.[5] The additional sanctity usually attached to caves and to cave-dwelling monks may be appreciated by referring to the popular belief that the earliest monks were the best, and that they lived in caves.

The large number of donative inscriptions of the first few centuries of Buddhism, incised on the brows of the caves found scattered throughout the Island, indicates the extent to which the caves were used by monks, and shows how kings, ministers and ordinary men and women were eager to dedicate them to the Saṅgha.[6] Even bhikkhus are mentioned as donors.[7] It may be that caves originally received by certain theras for their own use were later dedicated by them, in their turn, to the Sangha. Or it may be that some theras had their own relatives prepare the caves and grant them to the Sangha on their (theras') behalf, and so the names of those theras were inscribed as donors.

Sometimes several members of the same family each separately granted caves.[8] Whether these caves belonged to their own families or whether they were the property of the State cannot be decided. Probably, most of the caves belonged to the king,

1. But cf. the Kaṇirajānu-Tissa incident at Mihintalē, above p. 86.
2. Fa Hien, p. 107.
3. Vsm. p. 89.
4. *Ibid.* p. 94.
5. Rsv. II, p. 126.
6. See EZ. I, pp. 10 ff. and 135 ff. These inscriptions are more or less like formulae. They record that the cave of so-and-so was granted to the Saṅgha, e.g., *Gapati Naga puta Tiśaha lene śagaśa* "the cave of Tissa, the son of the householder Nāga (is given) to the Saṅgha". (EZ. I, p. 20, No. 9).
7. EZ. I, p. 144, No 4.
8. *Ibid.* I, p. 18.

but people were allowed to clean them and make them habitable for bhikkhus, and even to inscribe their own names as donors. This would have served as a stimulus to the spread of Buddhism and the promotion of the good life among the people.

Preparing a cave for the residence of monks was not an easy task. Fortunately, we get in the Pāli Commentaries casual references to the process that was in vogue at least about the fifth century A.C. First of all, the cave was filled with fire-wood and the wood was then burnt; this helped to remove loose splinters of rock as well as to dispel unpleasant odours. After the cave was cleaned, walls of bricks were built on the exposed sides, and doors and windows fixed.[1] Sometimes walls were plastered and whitewashed. Then such simple articles of furniture as a bed and a chair necessary for a recluse were provided.[2] Mention is made of residential caves that were even painted.[3] Thus, the *Visuddhimagga*[4] records that the story of the renunciation of the last seven Buddhas was beautifully painted in the Kuraṇḍaka-mahāleṇa near Mahāgāma, the residence of Cittagutta Thera. Most probably the painting was executed on the ceiling of the cave. Some monks who visited it are said to have appreciated the paintings and communicated their sense of gratification to the resident thera.[5] A cave thus appointed was a residence pleasant to live in for a person of unsophisticated aesthetic sense and quiet temperament ; it was besides an ideal place for deep meditation. The inside of a cave is pleasantly cool during the hot season. In addition to caves there were probably also huts (*paṇṇasālā*) built in quiet places for the residence of early monks.

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1. Archaeological remains of caves at Mihintalē and other places also show that caves had walls with doors and windows.

2. The account of a young monk who prepared a cave in Cittala-pabbata for his old teacher (AA. p. 26) and the account of how the people improved Indasālaguhā (DA. p. 496).

3. Even to-day we can see the remnants of such old paintings in some caves in Ceylon, e.g., Karaṁbagala in Southern Province and caves at Sīgiriya.

4. Vsm. p. 29.

5. But. Cittagutta Thera had never raised his eyes and looked at these paintings. See also below p. 206.

XVIII



Ceylon Archaeological Survey

THŪPĀRĀMA VIHĀRA (so-called) Polonnaruva.

(*a 12th cent. Image House*)

(p. 114)

XIX



Ceylon Archaeological Survey

ANCIENT VIHĀRA (in ruin,) Anurādhapura.

(p. 115)

After Buddhism became the religion of the State and the people, the bhikkhus could not be allowed to live alone in lonely caves and huts on mountains and in jungles cut off from society, ignoring their obligations to the people who supported them and looked up to them for guidance. Therefore monasteries began to rise in the neighbourhood of flourishing cities and prosperous villages, so that the intercourse between the Sangha and the laity could easily and frequently be maintained.[1]

The first monastery in Ceylon was the Tissārāma in the Mahāmeghavana of Anurādhapura established by Devānampiya-Tissa. This later developed into the Mahāvihara, the great Monastery. At the beginning there was only a clay-built house for the residence of bhikkhus, which was known as Kālapāsāda-pariveṇa.[2] Later on, several other houses were erected in the Mahāmeghavana by the king and his ministers for the use of the monks.[3]

The cetiya was introduced as a feature of the Ceylon monastery after the Thūpārāma Dāgāba was built, and the Bo-tree after the Bodhi-branch from Buddhagayā was planted at the Mahāmeghavana. Both these events took place during the reign of Dēvānampiya-Tissa. Simultaneously, large monasteries began to rise in Rohaṇa and other parts of the Island. By the second century B.C., during the reign of Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī, the Mahāvihāra at Anurādhapura with its large number of buildings, became a vast colony of monks. Two other important monasteries at Anuradhāpura, namely the Abhayagiri and Jetavana, were built in the first century B.C. and the fourth century A.C. respectively.

Usually, a monastery was called an *ārāma* or *vihāra*. According to the accepted opinion of the fifth century A.C., even a

1. At the time of the Buddha, too, monasteries were near big cities, e.g., Jetavana near Srāvasti. In later times, too, large monasteries were established near flourishing cities, e.g., Sāñchi near Vidisā in Central India, Dharmarājika Stūpa and the monastery near Takṣasilā once the foremost city in the Punjab. When the ārāma is near a city its maintenance becomes easier.

2. Mhv. xv 203–204.

3. *Ibid.* xv 205–213.

hut of leaves (*paṇṇasālā*)[1] at least of four cubits in extent was indeed a *vihāra* built "for the Sangha of the four quarters", if there was a cetiya there, if the hearing of the dhamma was done there, and if the bhikkhus coming from all four directions could, even without permission, wash their feet, open the door with the key, arrange the bedding, stay there and leave the place at their convenience.[2]

From this statement we can see that the *sine qua non* for a vihāra were a cetiya, living quarters and the preaching of the dhamma there. But there were several additional features in a fully developed monastery.

At the entrance to a large monastery there was, at least by about the 9th or 10th century, a building called *Doraṭu-pän-maḍiya* "Water-Pavilion-at-the-Gate". This was the place where pots of water (*pän-kaḷa*) were kept, most probably for pilgrims to perform their ablutions before they entered the holy precincts, for sprinkling water on flowers and also for drinking. The "Water-Pavilion-at-the-Gate" of the Jetavanārāma was a storeyed building of considerable size. It was laid down that no outsider should be allowed to stay in the building either in the upper storey or in the lower one or in the place meant for pots of water.[3] This pavilion seems to have been fairly large in order to give the crowds of pilgrims from distant places room to wash themselves and to change into clean clothes.[4]

At the entrance to the courtyard of some dāgäbas at Anurādhapura we find near the flight of steps some blocks of stone

1. Originally *paṇṇasālā* was, as the name implies, in fact a 'hut of leaves'. But in later times the term was applied to any kind of monastic residence. Today modern buildings in Buddhist temples in Ceylon are called *pansala*, the Sinhalese word derived from *paṇṇasālā*. A 9th century inscription uses the word *pan-hala*. (EZ. IV, pp. 178–179).

2. *Yattha cetiyaṃ patiṭṭhitam hoti, dhammasavanaṃ karīyati, catuhi disāhi bhikkhū āgantvā appaṭipucchitvā yeva pāde dhovitvā kuñcikāya dvāraṃ vivaritvā senāsanaṃ paṭijaggitvā vasitvā yathā phāsukaṃ gacchanti, so antamaso caturataniyā paṇṇasālā'pi hotu, cātuddisaṃ saṅghaṃ uddissa-kaṭavihāro't'eva vuccati.* (AA. p. 805).

3. EZ. III p. 227.

4. Up to this day it is the custom (fast disappearing it is true) in the villages for the devotees who go to a distant vihara to observe *aṭa-sil* on pōya days to wash themselves at the pond of the viharā and change into new clothes before they enter the vihāra premises.

with basin-shaped hollows scooped in them. A donative inscription found on one such stone-basin at the Pankuliya monastery near Anurādhapura refers to it by the explanatory term *pā-dōni* (P. *pādadhovanī*) which would mean "foot-washer". The Ruvanvälisāya inscription of Queen Kalyāṇavatī refers to this feature by the term *pā-deṇi* (P. *pāda-doṇi*) meaning "foot-trough". Monolithic cisterns which can be called "foot-troughs" are found at some dāgäbas like the Thūpārāma. These show that there were stone basins in which water was placed for the worshippers to wash their feet before entering the sacred precincts.[1]

Within the precincts of the monastery the most important object was the cetiya or the dāgäba in which the relics of the Buddha were enshrined. There were two courtyards round the cetiya, at least round the principal cetiyas like the Ruvanvälisāya. The outer one was called *Vālikaṅgaṇa* or sand-court. It was strewn with white sand and surrounded by a wall.[2] The inner courtyard which was on a higher level and paved with stone, as we see even today at Anurādhapura, was surrounded by an imposing retaining wall called *Hatthipākāra*, decorated with figures of elephants. There were splendid gateways, called *toraṇa*, at the four main entrances.[3]

The dome of the cetiya rose from three gradual and circular terraces called *vedikā-bhūmi*[4] or *pupphādhāna*[5] which formed the base of the cetiya. Of these three terraces the uppermost and perhaps even the middle one were used as altars for offering flowers. The uppermost terrace was known as *kucchi-vedikā-bhūmi*.[4] On the lowest terrace there were sixteen marks of footsteps known as *pādapīṭhikā* fixed at certain regular points round the cetiya. They indicated the places where the pilgrim

1. See Paranavitana : *The stūpa in Ceylon*, p. 68.

2. Mhv. xxxiii 31; xxxiv 70. Perhaps in early days there was only the sand-court. But later on, when the State was richer and the monasteries were expanding, the courtyard was enlarged and divided.

3. MA. p. 699 ; Mhv. xxxviii 10.

4. MA. p. 699. *Vedikā-bhūmi* means "terrace".

5. Mhv. xxx 51, 56, 60 ; xxxiii 22. Geiger translates the word *pupphādhāna* as "terrace for flower-offering" or "flower-terrace". The Sinhalese term is *malpiyavasā* (*Dharmapradīpikā*, p. 312.)

should stop and kneel down and worship in the course of his circumambulation, after offering flowers at the upper terraces. There were flights of steps leading to these terraces. A Story in the *Majjhima Commentary* tells us how a certain thera ascended the *vedikā-bhūmi* through the western flight of steps (*pacchima-mukhanissitena sopānena*) and offered flowers.[1]

1. MA. p. 699 ; see also DhSA. p. 91. *Mahācetiyaṃ padakkhiṇaṃ katvā solasasu pādapīṭhikāsu pañcapatiṭṭhitena vanditvā.*

It appears that by about the 12th century the custom of ascending the *vedikā-bhūmi* (terraces) and circumambulating there had gone out of practice. Guruḷugōmi in his *Dharmapradīpikā* (12th c.) says that there were sixteen *pādapīṭhikās* fixed at the Ruvanvälisāya indicating the points at which sixteen golden Buddha-images were enshrined inside the cetiya and that these *pādapīṭhikās* showed the pilgrim the points where he should stop and worship standing outside the *malpiyavasā* (i.e., *pupphādhāna*) (*Dharmapradīpikā*, p. 312). This shows that by about the 12th c. *pāda-pīṭhikās* were fixed not along the *vedikā-bhūmi*, but on the courtyard of the cetiya. Some stone slabs with footprints carved on them are yet to be seen in the courtyard of the Ruvanvälisāya.

The practice of worshipping a cetiya at sixteen places seems to have come down at least to the 15th century. For, Toṭagamuvē Sri Rāhula in his *Säḷalihini Sandeśaya says* : *Maha dāgäp himin vaňdu soḷosa tän siṭa* "worship the great and lordly dāgäba (at Kälaṇiya) stopping at sixteen places" (v. 65). But in the Pāli Commentaries the instructions regarding the worship of a cetiya are sometimes different. See below p. 284.

When we come to the Poḷonnaruva period, we find this simple idea of *pādapīṭhikā* elaborately developed. In Poḷonnaruva one can yet see round the ancient dāgäbas like the Kirivehera and the Rankotvehera at regular distances eight small shrine-rooms in which the Buddha images are kept. These shrines are built very close to the dāgäba. Evidently the number was reduced to eight because the Poḷonnaruva dāgäbas are smaller than those at Anurādhapura. Devotees had to kneel down and worship at these places in their circumambulation. Originally the *pādāpīṭhikā* reminded the devotee of the Buddha-images within the cetiya ; but during the Poḷonnaruva period the image itself was placed there to be seen instead of *pādapīṭhikā* to help the worshippers.

The idea of ascending the *malpiyavasā* (flower-terraces) and walking round may seem rather awkward to a modern pious Buddhist. But that was the common practice in early days. The remains of the ancient flights of steps leading to the *vedikā-bhūmi* can be seen at cetiyas like Mirisaväṭiya and Kanṭaka-cetiya. The flights of steps leading to the terraces of some of the stūpas at Sāñchi and Bhilsa in Central India can still be used by pilgrims. The three circular terraces in fact formed the base of the cetiya, and the relics were enshrined in the dome several feet above the uppermost terrace. Therefore walking round the cetiya along the terrace was disrespect to the sacred relics inside.

Round the cetiya was a structure called *Cetiya-ghara* or cetiya-house.[1] This edifice seems to have been a shelter built over the monument on stone pillars with a roof covering it. Sometimes it had doors,[2] and beautiful carpets were spread inside.[3] It was thus more or less like a house enclosing the cetiya, with altars for offering flowers within.[4]

The *cetiya-ghara* was found only over small dāgābas like the Thūpārāma and the Ambatthala,[5] as is evident from archaeological remains. No mention is made of a *cetiya-ghara* at any of the large dāgābas like the Ruvanväli, the Abhayagiri or the Jetavana. Obviously, it was not possible to build a *cetiya-ghara* over such gigantic dāgābas. The *cetiya-ghara* served the purpose of a shelter not only to the cetiya, but also to its worshippers who walked round it in sun and rain. The *cetiya-ghara*, though it protected the monument, marred its simple and majestic beauty, particularly on a moonlight night.[6] Sometimes a cetiya was adorned with paintings (*cittakammaṃ*), as had been in the case of

1. Sometimes called Cetiya-geha as well. Smp. III (Col. 1900), pp. 279, 314; Mhv. xxxv 87; 90–91; xxxvi 9. 106; xlviii 66.

The origin of the *cetiya-ghara* is uncertain. In Buddhaghosa's Commentary to the *Assalāyana-sutta* (Ma. p. 785) it is stated that Assalāyana after his conversion built a cetiya inside his house (*attano antonivesaneyeva cetiyaṃ kāresi*). His descendants, up to the time the commentary was written, followed the same practice, and, whenever they built a dwelling for themselves, they erected a cetiya inside the house. (*Yāvajjadivasā Assalāyanavaṃse jātā nivesanaṃ kāretvā antonivesane cetiyaṃ kārenteva*). Could it be that this practice created a tradition that the cetiya should be inside a house, i.e., that it should have a roof over it?

In this connection reference also may be made to such stūpas as at Karle which are also inside the cave. Relics represent the living Buddha. See e.g., Mahinda's statement that he and his colleagues wished to go to India to "see the Buddha". When it was pointed out that the Buddha was dead, his answer was : "if you see the relics, you see the Buddha". (*dhātusu diṭṭhesu diṭṭho hoti jino*, Mhv. xvii 3). A cetiya enshrining such relics would, therefore, also be considered the habitation of the living Buddha. Thus the cetiya was the *gandhakuṭī*, residence of the Buddha, and it was natural that it should have a roof.

2. Mhv. xlviii 66.

3. Smp. (SHB) p. 339.

4. A modified modern example of a *cetiyaghara* can be seen at Attanagalla, Ceylon.

5. Mhv. xxxv 87, 90, 91; xxxvi 9, 106; xlviii 66.

6. See also Paranavitana's chapter on *Cetiya-ghara* in the *Stupa in Ceylon*.

the Thūpārāma atter its restoration by Aggabodhi II (601-611 A.C.).[1] The Ambatthalathūpa was painted golden with *manosilā* or red arsenic powder by Saddhā-Tissa (77-59 B.C.).[2]

Next in importance comes the Bodhi-tree. Some of these trees were known by special names, like Vaḍḍhamāna Bodhi,[3] which is evidence of the affection and veneration in which the holy tree was held by Buddhists. In a monastery, the Bodhi occupies place second only to that of the relics of the Buddha. A branch of a Bō-tree could be cut only if it interfered with a cetiya or *paṭimā* (image) or an *āsanaghara*[4] in which Buddha-relics are enshrined, or if the removal of a rotting or an oozing branch facilitates the healthy growth of the tree, like a surgical operation on a human body. A branch could also be removed if birds perching upon it soiled the cetiya.[5] But no branch of a Bo-tree could be cut for any other purpose.[6]

There were usually four *toraṇas* or gateways on the four sides of the courtyard of the Bo-tree.[7] and a *vedī* of raised platform of stone was laid out round the tree[8] on which devotees could kneel down and worship. Closer to the tree was the *Bodhi-ghara* or

1. Mhv. xlii 56.

2. Rsv. II p. 10 ; Mahāthūpa gilt, Mhv. xxxvi 24.

3. Mhv. xlviii 5 ; xlix 15.

4. *Āsanagharas* were structures evidently containing flower-altars, and in them were sometimes enshrined Buddha-relics as mentioned in the reference quoted. These may be what are now popularly called "*vāhalkaḍas*". (*Vāhalkaḍa* is no doubt a misnomer). In fromt of these "Vāhalkaḍas" at Anurādhapura and Mihintalē there are stone-built *āsanas* or altars, and the term *ghara* could be applied to them as the "vahalkaḍas" bear the appearance of *vimānas* (houses). It is interesting to note that when a so-called "vāhalkaḍa" at the Ruvanvälisāya was recently dismantled, it was found to contain, among other things, caskets with relics in them. (See *Recent Archaeological Finds at Ruvanväli-dāgäba* by Paranavitana, JRAS. (CB) Vol. XXXVII No. 101, p. 3 ff). We find four *mal-āsanas* (flower-altars) with or without shelter round the modern dāgäbas for offering flowers, and may be regarded as poor descendants of the ancient majestic *āsanagharas*.

5. This shows that sometimes Bo-trees were quite near the cetiya.

6. AA. p. 250 ; VbhA. p. 300.

7. Mhv. xxxvi 103, 126.

8. *Ibid.* xxxvi 52, 103 ; xlii 19.

Bodhi-geha.[1] Unlike the *cetiya-ghara,* this structure which was like a chapel was built not over the tree, but round its trunk, below the branches.[2] Sometimes there were images of the Buddha in the Bodhi-house.[3] Like the *cetiya-ghara* this building, too, was perhaps meant to give shelter to the devotees who circumambulated the sacred tree.

Next in importance comes the *paṭimā-ghara* or image-house which contained the image of the Buddha. Here it would be interesting to inquire when the image house became an important feature of the Ceylon monastery.[4] We have seen that in Mahinda's plan of the Mahāvihāra there was no place for an image house, though sites for the Mahāthūpa and Mahābodhi were located.[5] We should remember here that no images of the Buddha are known to have existed during the time of Asoka in the third century B.C. Buddha images are altogether absent from the older sculptures at Sāñchi and Bhārhut. Even in representations of scenes where the Buddha's presence was to be positively expected, the Buddha is indicated by symbols such as foot-prints, a wheel or, a seat above which is shown an umbrella with garlands. A scene on the sculptures of Bhārut represents Ajātasattu kneeling before the foot-prints, whereas the inscription distinctly says "Ajātasatru bows down in obeisance to the

1. Mhv. xv 205; xxxvii 15; xxxviii 43, 69; xii 65; xlii 19, 66; xlviii 70; xlix 15; li 54; Smp. III (Col. 1900) pp. 279, 314.

Many kings throughout the centuries are reported to have built *bodhi-gharas* round the Mahā-Bodhi at the Mahā-vihāra and other Bō-trees elsewhere.

2. This is evident from an account found in the Mhv. li 54 ff. Yuvarāja Mahinda (in the time of Sena II, 851-885 A.C) began to build a *Bodhi-ghara* at the Mahā-Bodhi. The carpenters who noticed that a branch was, threatening to break by striking a beam, informed the Yuvarāja. He made offerings to the holy tree, and prayed and wished that the branch should bend upwards so that it might be possible to build the house. It happened accordingly. This account shows that the Bodhi-house was built not over, but below the branches. See also Clv. tr. I, p. 32, n. 6. The *Saddharmaratnāvaliya* (pp. 13, 18) too indicates that the *Bodhi-ghara* was built round the tree.

3. Mhv. xxxvii 31.

4. Today the image-house of *vihāragē,* as it is commonly called containing the image of the Buddha, forms a main feature of a monastery in Ceylon.

5. See above p. 53.

Buddha."[1] There are many instances which go to prove that the introduction of the image of the Buddha and its worship in India date from a period posterior to Asoka. Kern[2] thinks that all the evidence collected tends to leave the impression that the beginnings of the worship of the Buddha images fall somewhere in the first century B.C., if not later.

But a Sinhalese tradition, current at least in the fifth century A.C., which cannot be wholly ignored, traces the history of the Buddha-image as far back as the third century B.C.[3] In relating the activities of Jeṭṭha-Tissa (323-333 A.C.) the *Mahāvaṃsa* refers to a "great and beautiful stone-image that was placed of old by Devānampiya-Tissa in the Thūpārāma".[4] If we accept this statement, Ceylon had the earliest Buddha-image in the world. Whether Devānampiya-Tissa had actually this image made, or whether a later tradition attributed to the first Buddhist king of Ceylon an ancient image of unknown origin that was found at the Thūpārāma, we cannot be definite. Merely because we do not find Buddha-images among the early sculptures at Sāñchi and Bhārhut in India, it is not logical to conclude that there were no Buddha-images made in the third century B.C. anywhere else either. Was there anything to prevent the birth of new ideas in the Island in advance of the continent?

The "great-stone-image" (*urusilāpaṭimā*) mentioned above was a celebrated statue which was held particularly sacred. King Jeṭṭha-Tissa (323-333 A.C.) removed it from the Thupārāma

1. *Ajātasata Bhagavato vaṃdate. Bharhut Inscriptions* (Barua and Sinha), p. 36 (167).

2. MIB. p. 95.

3. Fa Hien refers to a tradition that was current in India in his days which says that king Prasenajit caused an image of the Buddha to be made of *gośirṣacandana* wood during the lifetime of the Buddha. Fa Hien says that this image served as a model for all subsequent images of the Buddha (Fa Hien, pp. 56-57). There is also a book in Ceylon known as *kosala-bimbavaṇṇanā* containing an account of an image of the Buddha built by Pasenadī, King of Kosala. The work was probably written about the 13th or 14th century (DPPN. I, p. 698). The Mhv xxx 72 records that Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī (101-77 B.C.) had enshrined a golden statue of the Buddha in the Suvaṇṇamālī Mahācetiya.

4. Mhv. xxxvi 128. *Devānampiyatissena so patiṭṭhāpitaṃ purā*
Thūpārāme urusilāpaṭimaṃ cārudassanaṃ.

and set it up at a monastery called Pācīnatissa-pabbata.[1] Mahāsena (334-362 A.C.) removed it from there and placed it at the Abhayagiri.[2] Buddhadāsa (about the end of the 4th century) set jewels in the eye-sockets of this image.[3] Dhātusena (460–478 A.C.) erected an edifice for it, and, as the gems placed by Buddhadāsa had been lost, he provided jewels for a pair of eyes which were to be made. He also had the halo and the crest made and the hair studded with blue gems.[4] Silāmeghavaṇṇa (617–626 A.C.) repaired its old shelter, adorned it with various gems and dedicated to it the Kolavāpi tank.[5] Sena II (851–885 A.C.) restored the ruined temple of the image, and his queen placed a blue diadem on it.[6] This image is repeatedly referred to by various names such as *urusilāpaṭimā*,[7] *mahāsilāpaṭimā*,[8] *silāsatthu*,[9] *silāsambuddha*,[10] *silāmayabuddha*,[11] *silāmayamuninda*[12] and *silāmayamahesī*.[13]

It is interesting to notice here that the word *silā* (stone) is invariably used wherever the reference is made to this image. There were other stone images, but this one was particularly known as "the great stone image." The Minitalē Inscription of Mahinda IV (956–972 A.C.) refers to *maṅgul-maha-sala-piḷima* (*maṅgala-mahā-silā-paṭimā*) "the auspicious great stone image."[14] The Jetavanārāma slab inscriptions of the same king refer to a *maha-sala-piḷima* "great stone image" in highly eulogistic terms.[15]

1. Mhv. xxxvi 129. Pācīnatissa-pabbata is identified with the ruins excavated near the Nuvaraväva at Anurādhapura.
2. *Ibid.* xxxvii 14.
3. *Ibid.* xxxvii 123; xxxviii 61-62.
4. *Ibid.* xxxviii 61-64.
5. *Ibid.* xliv 68-69.
6. *Ibid.* li 77,87.
7. *Ibid.* xxxvi 128.
8. *Ibid.* xxxvii 123.
9. *Ibid.* xxxviii 61.
10. *Ibid.* xxxix 7.
11. *Ibid.* xliv 68.
12. *Ibid.* li 77.
13. *Ibid.* li 87.
14. EZ. I, p. 92.
15. *Ibid.* I, pp. 218, 219, 233.

These references show that there was an ancient stone image of the Buddha which commanded unusually great respect, and which was honoured as a relic of immense value. Wickremasinghe thought that the stone image of the Buddha mentioned in the inscriptions of Mahinda IV was probably the one which King Devānampiya-Tissa set up at the Thūpārāma,[1] and drew attention to the possibility that this image might have been the same which the Chinese pilgrim Fa Hien saw at the Abhayagiri-vihāra in the fifth century A.C.[2]

During the second century A.C. we come across only one reference in the *Mahāvaṃsa* to Buddha-images and image-houses. King Vasabha (127-171 A.C.) is reported to have made four Buddha-images and built a house for them.[3] And in the third century A.C., too, we get only one reference to images. Two bronze-images are said to have been made by Vohārika-Tissa (269-291 A.C.) and placed in the eastern *Bodhi-ghara* of the Mahābodhi.[4] But from the 4th century onwards we have a large

1. EZ. I, p. 217.
2. *Ibid.* I, p. 230.

One is tempted to ask whether Devānampiya-Tissa's Buddha-image is the same as the celebrated sedentary statue of the Buddha in samādhi at Anurādhapura. It has a greater appeal for many a visitor than any other Buddha-image anywhere in the world. Jawaharlal Nehru liked it: "the strong calm features of the Buddha's statue soothed me and gave me strength and helped me to overcome many a period of depression" in Dehra Dun Gaol. (Jawaharlal Nehru's *Autobiography*, p. 271). This perhaps is the world's best Buddha-image so far discovered. E. B. Havell, in his *Handbook of Indian Art*, p. 155, says that the Sārnath Buddha has the same type of face. But one who has studied the two faces in the original can see a great difference between the two. The unsophisticated simplicity, calm strength and fortitude that characterize the face of the Anurādhapura Buddha are lacking in the youthful and rather complacent look of the Sārnath Buddha. The majestic seriousness of the face of the Anurādhapura image commands awe and respect, while the lively beauty of the Sārnath image demands love and admiration. Havell is right when he says that the Sārnath image is more dry and academic in treatment, and lacks the beautiful rhythmic flow of the Ceylon image, and that the rather wooden plastic treatment shows the hand of a copyist lacking in original power of expression.

3. Mhv. xxxv 89.
4. Mhv. xxxvi 31.

number of references in the *Mahāvaṃsa* and elsewhere to images and image-houses by many kings.[1]

Buddhaghosa's Pāli Commentaries contain references to Buddha-images only in two contexts, but there are no image-houses mentioned at all. According to the Commentaries an image was important only if the relics of the Buddha were enshrined in it. At the time the Pāli commentaries were written, in the 5th century A.C., on the occasion of alms-giving to the Sangha "wise men" (*paṇḍita-manussā*) used to place an image or a casket with relics (*sadhātukaṃ paṭimaṃ vā cetiyaṃ vā*) and offer food and drink first to the image or the casket.[2] In the discussion as to when it was lawful to cut a branch of a Bo-tree, it was said that it should be cut only if it interferes with (*bādhayamānaṃ*) a *thūpa* or an image with relics (*sadhātukaṃ pana thūpaṃ vā paṭimaṃ vā*).[3]

Whether the image-houses (*paṭimāghara* or *paṭimāgeha*) mentioned in the chronicle before the 5th century A.C. were like the elaborate image-houses of the Poḷonnaruva period and after, or whether they were simple shelters (pavilions) erected over the images is not quite clear. But it is more probable on the evidence that they were mere shelters to protect the images from wind and weather.

Whatever the size and the shape of these structures, it is a striking fact that no *paṭimāghara* or image-house is mentioned in the Pāli Commentaries at all. Bhikkhus are requested to perform certain daily duties such as sweeping and cleaning the *cetiyaṅgaṇa* and *bodhiyaṅgaṇa* (courtyards of cetiya and bodhi), *ceriyaghara* and *bodhighara*, *uposatha*-house, *pānīya-mālaka* (water-pavilion) and the *pariveṇa* (living quarters),[4] but no mention is made of a *paṭimāghara*. The *Samantapāsādikā* gives a list of *senāsanas*

1. 4th C. : Mhv. xxxvi 104 ; xxxvii 15,31, 123, 174, 183, 201 ; 5th C. : *Ibid.* xxxviii 61–68, 78 ; xxxix 6, 7, 13, 45–46 ; 6th C. : *Ibid.* xli 29; xlii 57 ; 7th C. : *Ibid.* xlii 57 ; xliv 68 ; xlv 60–61 ; xlix 49 ; 8th C. *Ibid.* xlviii 137,139 ; 9th C. : *Ibid.* xlix 14, 17 ; l 66 ; li 69, 77 ; EZ. II, p. 18 ; III. p. 264.

2. Smp. III (1900) pp. 264–265.

3. AA. p. 250 ; VbhA. p. 300.

4. Vsm. p. 254 ; MA. p. 548 ; AA. pp. 544, 820 ; VbhA. p. 208.

(places fit for living) and *asenāsanas* (places unfit for living).[1] In this list even such insignificant things as *dāru-aṭṭa* (firewood-shed) and *sammajjanī-aṭṭa* (brooms-shed) are mentioned. But the image-house is not included either among the *senāsanas* or the *asenāsanas* in which two categories all structures in the monastery should be included.

It is surprising that the Buddha-image, though in existence at the time, was not given a place in the scheme of worship by the Pāli Commentaries. Instructions are given to meditating monks that they should go and worship the *cetiya* and the *bodhi*, and then set out for the alms-round, but the image is completely ignored.[2] Even in other places where worshipping is casually referred to, only the *cetiya* and the *bodhi* are mentioned, and no image or image-house at all.[3] In the discussion regarding the *ānantariyakamma*, it is said that after the Buddha's death if one breaks a *cetiya*, cuts a *bodhi* tree, or damages relics, one commits a crime equal to *ānantariya*.[4] But there is no word at all about the destroying or damaging of an image. An image was considered important only if relics were enshrined in it.[5] Without them it was a thing of little or no religious value.

Even more surprising than all this is a statement found in the Commentary on the *Vibhaṅga*[6] which says that one gets *Buddhālambanapīti*[7] by looking at a *cetiya* or a *bodhi*. But no mention is made of the Buddha image. If a similar statement were made today, we should naturally say at once that one gets

1. Smp. III (Colombo, 1900) p. 314. *Cetiyagharaṃ, bodhigharaṃ, āsanagharaṃ, sammujjani-aṭṭaṃ, dāruaṭṭaṃ, vaccakuṭī, iṭṭhakasālā, vaḍḍhakisālā, dvārakoṭṭhako, pānīyamālo, maggo, pokkharaṇīti etāni hi asenāsanāni. Vihāro, aḍḍhayogo, pāsādo, hammiyaṃ guhā, maṇḍapo, rukkhamūlaṃ, veḷugumboti imāni senāsanāni.*

2. DA. pp. 129–130 ; MA. p. 207 ; VbhA. p. 245.

3. *E.g.*, VbhA. pp. 204, 309 ; MA. p. 888 ; AA. p. 256 ; Smp. III (Colombo, 1900), p. 316.

4. Death was the penalty for this crime according to the ancient Sinhalese law. See above pp. 71–72.

5. AA. p. 250 ; VbhA. p. 300 ; Smp. III (Colombo, 1900) 264–265.

6. VbhA. p. 243 ; see also DhSA. p. 91.

7. *Buddhāḷambanapīti* is the joy or ecstasy derived by looking at the Buddha or by thinking about him.

Buddhālambanapīti by looking at an image of the Buddha. Yet the Commentary does not mention looking at an image even as an alternative possibility. We should have expected a definite reference to Buddha-images if the authors of the Commentaries had recognized image-worship as having any religious value, because gazing at the Buddha-image would be one of the easiest ways of getting *Buddhālambanapīti*.

This brings us to an important problem. We know that there were images at the time the Pāli Commentaries were written, and there is evidence from the *Mahāvaṃsa* to prove that there were not only images, but also image-houses before the commentary period. Fa Hien also refers to a great Buddha-image and its splendid mansion at Anurādhapura early in the 5th century A.C. He saw a merchant offering a fan to this image.[1] There is not the slightest doubt that there were images and image-houses at the time the Pāli Commentaries were written. Why is it then, that in the Commentaries the image is not given a place in the scheme of religious worship, and why is the image-house not mentioned among the various features of a monastery?

Two explanations may be suggested. First, that at the time the old Sinhalese Commentaries were written there were perhaps no image-house in monasteries, and that even those images existing at the time were very few and of little importance, as they were an innovation in the old system of worship. They were recognized as objects of religious worship only if they had relics in them. Some of these images were small and portable, as they had to be carried from place to place on occasions of almsgiving to the Sangha, as we saw above. For such small images no separate buildings were necessary; they could be placed anywhere in the monastery, or in the *cetiyaghara* or the *bodhighara*.[2] There was no need to build a special image-house for them. Under these circumstances there was no occasion for the old Sinhalese Commentaries to refer to an image-house, and the Pāli writers of the commentaries who faithfully followed the

1. Fa Hien, pp. 102–103.
2. See above p. 121.

Sinhalese original did not think it proper to go out of their way to refer to image-houses, even though they were in existence in their own time.[1]

It may also be that the Buddha-image was popularized in Ceylon chiefly by Mahāyānists. The Pāli Commentaries were written under the auspices of the Mahāvihāra which was strongly opposed to Mahāyānism, and Buddhaghosa, who was a staunch Theravādin and ardent upholder of the Mahāvihāra traditions, did not wish to refer to anything that was Mahāyānistic. Even on the two occasions in which the image is referred to, he gives importance not to the image, but to the relics in it. The image-house is altogether ignored.

The attitude adopted to the Tooth Relic, too, lends support to this theory. Although the Tooth Relic was brought to Ceylon in the 4th century A.C. during the reign of Kitti-Siri-Meghavaṇṇa, and although this was a relic of extreme importance, no reference is made to it in the Pāli Commentaries of the 5th century. Fa Hien refers to the Tooth Relic and, as an ocular witness, gives a detailed description of its festival, how the relic was taken to the Abhayagiri-vihāra in procession for the annual public exhibition.[2] The only explanation that can be offered for the absence of any reference in the Pāli Commentaries to this most important relic is that it was brought to Ceylon under the aegis of Mahāyānism, and that it became the property of the Abhayagiri-vihāra. The same perhaps was true of the image of the Buddha.

Whatever the size and shape of the early image-house might have been, there are reasons to believe that at least towards the end of the 5th century it had developed into an edifice of considerable dimensions. The *Mahāvaṃsa*[3] records that the Hair Relic (*Kesadhātu*) that was brought here during the reign of moggal-

1. But on the other hand we know that the Commentaries are full of references to contemporary events and things.

2. Fa Hien, pp. 105–107.

3. Mhv. xxxix 50–51.

lāna I (496–513 A.C.) was placed in an image-house. It is unlikely that such a valuable treasure as the hair of the Buddha would have been deposited by a devoted Sinhalese Buddhist king in a building which was not strong and imposing, and in which the safety of the relic was not assured. It is also said that in the same image-house Moggallāna provided the figures of his maternal uncle and his wife, the figure of a horse, and the images of the two chief disciples of the Buddha, and a *maṇḍapa* studded with jewels.[1] It is clear that some space would be necessary for these things. There is reason to believe therefore that some of the image-houses, at least towards the end of the 5th century, were stately and spacious edifices with sculptures of various kinds in them. From this time onwards, images and image-houses seem to have become more and more popular. In the 10th century we get reference to provision made for lighting lamps in image-houses,[2] as we have today. But we cannot get a clear idea of the image-house till we come to Poḷonnaruva where the Chronicle records are supported by archaeological remains.

Accommodation for preaching and hearing the dhamma was a feature indispensable to a vihāra or monastery.[3] The ground floor of the Lohapāsāda at Anurādhapura was regularly used as a preaching hall.[4] In other places there were halls or sheds generally called *dhamma-maṇḍapa* especially erected for the purpose of hearing the dhamma.[5] In certain places the sermons were delivered in the *padhānaghara*.[6] The *dhamma-maṇḍapas* do not seem to have been spacious or comfortable. We get

1. *Ibid.* xxxix 52–53.
2. EZ. III, p. 264.
3. AA. p. 805.
4. Vsm. p. 68 ; Smp. (SHB) p. 425 ; MA. pp. 928, 1024.
5. Vsm. p. 72; Rsv. II, p. 3. The word *dhammasālā* "preaching-hall" or "sermon-hall" does not occur till we come to the period of Parakramabāhu 1, in the 12th century A.C. (Mhv. lxxviii 42).
6. MA. p. 65.

several reports of people bitten by snakes during sermons.[1] These stories show that generally the preaching halls were not spacious enough for a big audience, and that the surroundings were wild.

In almost all vihāras there was an *uposatha*-house where the bhikkhus assembled for acts of the *Vinaya* generally on full-moon and new-moon days.[2] The famous nine-storeyed Lohapāsāda was the *uposatha*-house of the Mahāvihāra at Anurādhapura.[3] There were gateways (*dvāra-koṭṭhaka*) at the four entrances. to this magnificent building.[4] In Anurādhapura itself there were separate *uposatha*-houses at other monasteries such as Thūpārāma, Maricavaṭṭi and Dakkhiṇa-vihāra.[5] At the entrance to some *uposatha*-houses, like the one at Cittalapabbata-vihāra in Rohaṇa, there were *dvārapālakarūpas* or "guardian-figures-at-the-door".[6] The figures at the *uposatha*-house in Cittala-pabbata were so beautiful and life-like that it is reported in the Pāli Commentaries that a young nun gazing on one of these figures died of intense internal passion (*anto rāgo*).[7]

In some monasteries there was, in later times, a *dhātu-sālā* or *dhātu-geha*, a house for keeping the relics of the Buddha.[8] These

1. At Gavaravāla-aṅgaṇa a certain thera who was listening to the *Ariyavaṃsa-sutta* was stung by a viper or adder (*gonasa*) (AA. p. 385). A woman was listening to the dhamma at Cittala-pabbata standing under a tree, probably because there was no room in the hall. Her child who was put to sleep by her side under the tree was stung by a serpent (AA. p. 386). Padhāniya Thera was stung by a poisonous snake when he was listening to the *Ariyavaṃsa* at Khaṇḍacela-vihāra (MA. p. 65). Another thera of Kuḍḍarajja who went to listen to the *Ariyavaṃsa* at Mahāvāpi-vihāra at Mahāgāma was standing on the grass outside the compound for want of accommodation. He was stung by an adder (*gonasa-sappa*))(Rsv. II, p. 4). A certain woman went to hear the dhamma at the *dhamma-maṇḍapa* near the gate of the Maṇicetiya at Mahāgāma. Her child who was playing in the sand near the wall was stung by a serpent (Rsv. II, p. 3).

2. Mhv. xxxiv 30 ; xxxv 85 ; xxxvi 16–17, 107.

3. *Ibid.* xxvii 4.

4. *Ibid.* xxvii 41.

5. *Ibid.* xxxvi 107.

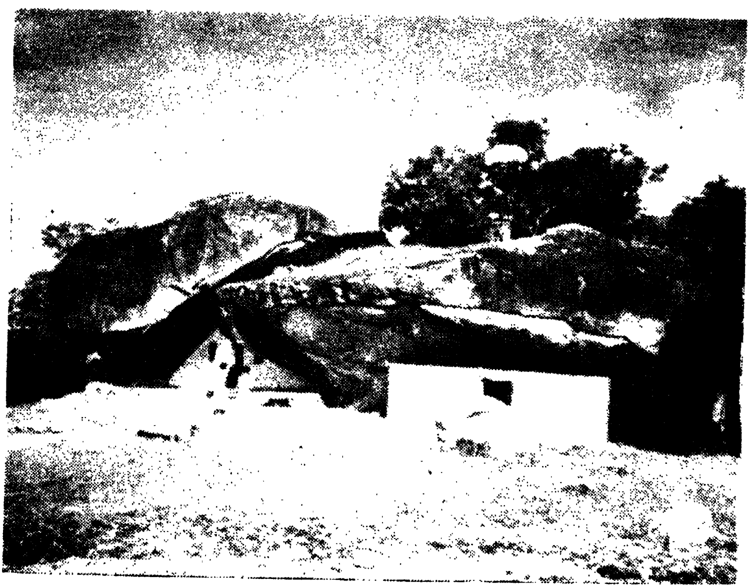
6. Usually there were guard-stones at the entrance to most religious buildings in ancient days as evident from the archaeological remains at Anurādhapura and other places.

7. DA. p. 727 ; VbhA. p. 353.

8. Mhv. xxxvii 15 (4th C.A.C.) ; xlvi 29 (7th C.A.C).

XX
CITTALAPABBATA VIEWS





Ceylon Archaeological Survey
(p. 130)

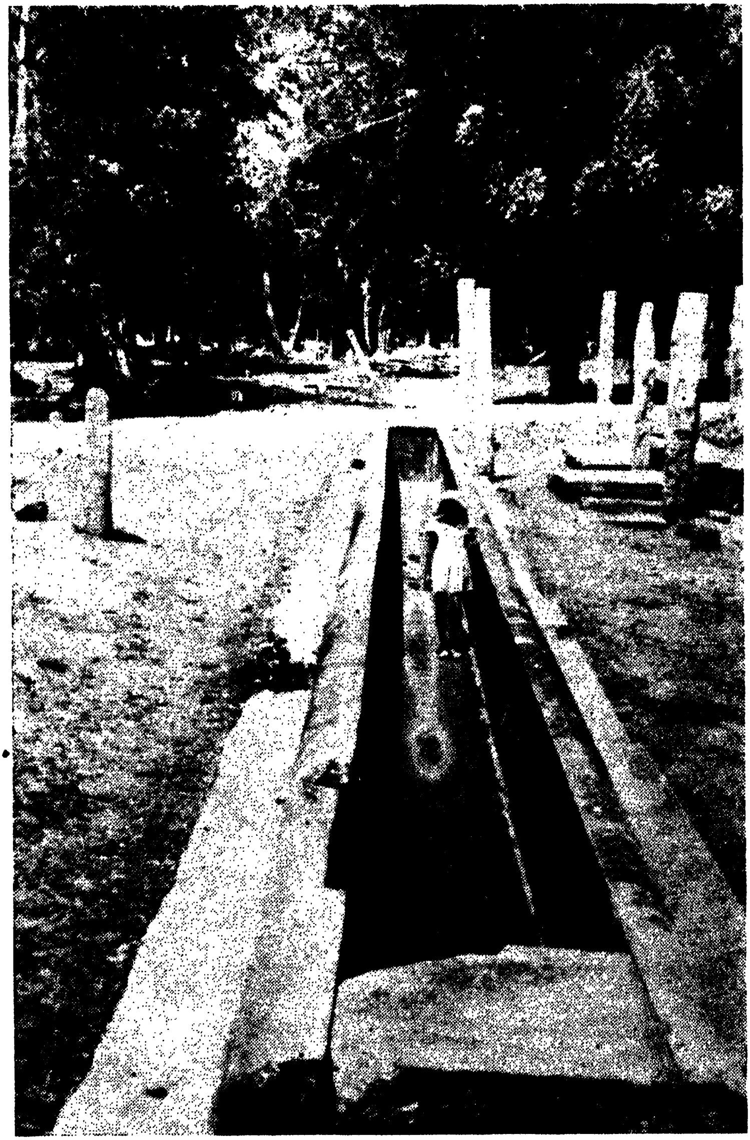


Photo: D. T. Devendra

Ancient RICE CANOE (stone), Anurādhapura.

(p. 131)

structures were, probably, erected in imitation of buildings earlier constructed for the reception of special relics such as the Hair Relic and the Tooth Relic. Reference has already been made to the building that housed the Hair Relic. The *Dāṭhādhātughara* or the Tooth Relic Chamber at Anurādhapura was an exquisite building of very great religious importance, and was not attached to a monastery, but was near the king's palace, at least in the 7th century as reported by Hiuen Tsiang.[1] There were figures of the elephants made of stucco (*sudhānāga*) adorning the court of the "Temple of the Tooth".[2]

There was also a building known as *Ratanapāsāda* in at least some of the large monasteries like the Mahāvihāra,[3] Jetavana[4] and Abhayagiri.[5] What type of building it was and what purpose it served we are not in a position to decide. If we agree with Ayrton's identification of *Ratanapāsāda* with the building popularly known as the "Elephant Stablee",[6] then it was a large building meant for public occasions. We cannot say whether this was meant for the public exhibition of the Tooth and other relics.[7]

In every monastery there was a refectory, called *bhattasālā*, where the monks were served with meals.[8] We know that the *bhattasālā* at the Mahāvihāra, originally built by Devānampiya-Tissa, was known as Mahāpāli.[9] This refectory served as a common distributing centre for all monks of the chief monasteries at Anurādhapura irrespective of their sect, even after separation of the sects had taken place.[10] In the Mahāpāli hall there were

1. Hiuen Tsiang Bk. XI, p. 428.
2. Mhv. xxxviii 8.
3. EZ. I, p. 228. Sinhalese *Ruvanpahā*.
4. *Ibid.* III, p. 227. Sinhalese *Ratnamāpiriven*.
5. Mhv. xxxvi 7. Sāñchi also had a building called *Ratnagṛha* (Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarm III, p. 262).
6. Archaeological Survey of Ceylon, Vol. I. p. 1 ff.
7. Paranavitana thinks that perhaps it was a building set apart for the worship of the 'Three Jewels' (*Ratanattaya*). EZ. III, p. 226, n. 4.
8. Mhv. xv 205 ; xx 23 ; xxxvi 12.
9. Dpv. xvii 92 ; Mhv. xv 23.
10. Rsv. II, p. 51 ; Fa Hien, p. 105 ; Hiuen Tsian, p. 250.

stone canoes or troughs for cooked rice (*bhattanāvā*).[1] The name *gal-näv* (stone-boat) occurs in an inscription found on one of the stone-troughs. The trough was the gift of a Sala-vaḍunā who was the custodian of the relics. The inscription probably belongs to the 10th century.[2] In connection with the *bhattasālā* there was the *salākagga* (Sinh. *lahāg*) where tickets, probably tokens made of wood, were issued to the monks before they proceeded to the refectory for receiving their ration of food.[3]

The living quarters of bhikkhus were generally known by such names as *vihāra*, *āvāsa*, or *pariveṇa*.[4] But the last name was the most popular one in ancient Ceylon.[5] In a monastery there were many *pariveṇas* which served as cells for monks. In the Mahāvihāra at Anurādhapura there were once 364 such *pariveṇas* and *prāsādas*.[6] The Thūpārāma had a large number of pariveṇas among which Asiggāhaka parivaṇa, in which Cūlanāga Thera lived, is known to us by name.[7] In the Tissamahā-vihāra in Rohaṇa there were 363 *pariveṇas* in the 9th and 10th centuries.[8] The name of the Silāpassaya-pariveṇa at that great monastery is known to literature.[9] Reference to a large number of *pariveṇas* in several vihāras built by many kings are found frequently in the Chronicles elsewhere. There were pots of water kept before the living quarters (*vasanaṭṭhāna*) of monks for the purpose of washing, and a ladle (*uḷuṅka*) was used to take water from the vessel.[10]

1. Mhv. xlii 67.
2. EZ. III, p. 133.
3. Mhv. xv 205 ; xxxvi 74 ; xlix 32.
4. Mhvg. pp. 91, 164, 165, 216, 385 ; Vsm. p. 67 ; Mhv. xliv, 31.
5. The term *pirivena* derived from Pāli *pariveṇa* is now used in Ceylon to denote only a monastic college where Buddhism and "Oriental" languages are taught as the principal subjects of study. *Vihāra* is used only for an image-house. *Āvāsa* denotes only a small residence of a few monks, without other features of a monastery.
6. Nks. p. 12. It is difficult to say what these *prāsādas* were. They may have been assembly and confession halls on the model of the Loha-pāsāda.
7. Rsv. II, pp. 122-123.
8. EZ. III, p. 223.
9. Rsv. II, p. 59.
10. MA. I, p. 536 ; Vsm. p. 254.

Among the living quarters of monks there was another important building known as *padhānaghara*. The name indicates that it was originally a house for meditation. But later on the name remained while its specific significance was forgotten. Perhaps the *padhānaghara* in later times was the residence of the chief monk of the monastery. Thus Buddhaghosa is reported to have had audience with Saṅghapāla Thera, the chief monk of the Mahāvihāra, at the Mahāpadhānaghara.[1] The *Samantapāsādikā* says that on festive occasions people go themselves into *pariveṇas* and *padhānagharas* and invite Masters of Tripiṭaka (*tipiṭake*) and preachers (*dhammakathike*) even with a hundred other monks.[2] Sometimes sermons were delivered in the *padhānaghara* itself.[3] Had the *padhānaghara* been used exclusively for meditation, it is unlikely that outsiders were allowed to enter and disturb the meditations with interviews and invitations.

It would seem that even as early as the 5th century A.C. the *padhānaghara* remained as a remnant of old monastic practices, although the original purpose was not genuinely followed. Or it may be that the occupants of a *padhānaghara* spent a few hours daily for meditation as a custom, or even recited *gāthās* or *suttas* as a substitute for meditation. However it was regarded as a necessary component part of a large monastery in ancient days,[4] like the *uposatha*-house of today. In modern Ceylon the *uposatha*-house is regarded as a necessary feature of a monastery, although it is generally used as a residence, and no *uposatha*-ceremony is

1. Mhv. xxxvii 232.
2. Smp. III (Col. 1900), p. 334.
3. MA. p. 65.
4. In Sinhalese it was called *piyangala*. The Mihintalē tablets of Mahinda IV, refers to *piyangala* (EZ. I, p. 95). So do the Jetavana Slab Inscriptions of Kassapa V (EZ. I, p. 47), Mäḍiligiriya Pillar inscription of Kassapa V (EZ. II, p. 25 ff.), Perumäiyaṇkulam Rock Inscription of Vasabha (EZ. II, p. 28, n. 8), Tissamahārāma Slab Inscription now in Colombo Museum (EZ. III, p, 106) and Mannar Kachcheri Pillar Inscription (EZ. III, p. 103).

By about the 10th C. the word *piyangala* was used indiscriminately to denote any place of solitude and quietness whether house or forest. The *Dhampiyā-Aṭuvā-Gäṭapada* explains the Pāli *Andhavana* by *Aňdavana piyangala*. But originally *piyangala* or *padhāna-ghara* was a building.

performed there regularly.[1] Although a *caṅkamana* or a walk used by Mahinda is referred to in the *Mahāvaṃsa*,[2] no references to *caṅkamanas* in later times are found in the Chronicles. But *caṅkamana* was regarded as important for meditation.

Among the other features of the monastery was the Vaccakuti or the latrine.[3] In suitable places within the monastery premises there were separate sheds for brooms (*sammajjanī-aṭṭa*) and firewood (*dāru-aṭṭa*). There was also a *pānīyamālaka* or a place for keeping pots of water for the common use.[4]

It is striking that no reference to a library during the Anurādhapura period is found either in the Pāli Commentaries or the Chronicles. The first direct mention of a library is to be found only in the 12th century, during the reign of Parākramabāhu I.[5] Though there may not have been libraries as such in the early days, there is no doubt that there were collections of books in the monasteries at Anurādhapura and Mahāgāma, for we know that the Tripiṭaka was committed to writing in the 1st century B.C., and the *Dīpavaṃsa* and the Pāli commentaries and the *Mahāvaṃsa* were written during the 4th and 5th centuries. The *Mahāvaṃsa* records that Buddhaghosa wrote his Pāli Commentaries living at the Ganthākara-vihāra, and that it was restored by Kassapa V (913-923 A.C.).[6] We do not know whether this refers to the library of the Mahāvihāra.

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1. The *uposatha*-house in modern Buddhist temples in Ceylon are generally used for Vinaya acts only during the *vassa* season. In certain monasteries even a *caṅkamana* is to be seen as a feature of the monastery, though it is not used for the purpose of meditation.

2. Mhv. xv 208.

3. It would be interesting here to draw attention to the decorative urinal stones found in the Western Monasteries on the Outer Circular Road of Anurādhapura (Tapovana?) and some other ancient places. No satisfactory explanation regarding these urinal stones has yet been offered. See *Archaeological Survey of Ceylon*, Vol. I, p. 56.

4. Smp. III (Colombo, 1900), pp. 279, 314 ; AA. p. 21.

5. Mhv. lxxviii 37, *duve ca potthakālaye*.

6. *Ibid.* xxxvii 243 ; lii 57.

9.

THE MONASTERY II: ITS ADMINISTRATION

The administration of a monastery was entirely in the hands of the Sangha. Each monastery had a *Nevāsika Mahāthera*[1] (Resident Chief Monk) who was responsible for its discipline and order. He had the power to use his discretion in matters of emergency. For instance, Abhaya Thera, the chief monk of the Cetiyagiri (Mihintalē) on one occasion entertained with the property of the Sangha a rebel and his followers who entered there to plunder the monastery. Though the action of the Mahāthera was not in keeping with the original rules of the *Vinaya*, he thought it was expedient to do so in order to save the valuable property of the monastery ; and though the other monks accepted his views after a discussion, they blamed him at the beginning for his action.[2]

In the early days when there were no temporalities the administration of a monastery was quite simple—a matter of maintaining the discipline of the inmates and keeping the place

1. AA. p. 23.

The law of succession and incumbency of Buddhist temporalities in the early period is not clearly known. Most probably the chief monk of a monastery was appointed by the Sangha. On what principle this was done we do not know for certain. But there should be no reasonable doubt that a monk of outstanding ability, knowledge and character was usually appointed to such posts, according to Vinaya practices. Evidently no individual monk had the authority to claim incumbency of a monastery on the ground of pupilary succession or *śiṣyānuśiṣya-paramparāva* as today. The first evidence of incumbency through pupilary succession can be detected in the Buddhannehäla Pillar Inscription during the time of Kassapa V (913–923) (EZ. I, pp. 194–196).

2. Smp. (SHB) pp. 338–339.

clean and in order. But later on, with the increase of monks and the establishment of large religious endowments yielding huge incomes, the administration of a monastery assumed the proportions of a complete department with several branches. Inscriptions give us an interesting picture of the administrative system of a monastery in ancient Ceylon.[1] Although most of these lithic records belong to the 9th and 10th centuries, it is reasonable to assume that the system referred to was based on similar earlier schemes. In fact, the inscription of Mahinda IV at Mihintalē explicitly states that in drafting the present rules the earlier ones that were current at Mihintalē and the Abhayagiri were consulted.[2]

The lithic records regarding monastic administration available to us belong to monasteries which were under Mahāyānistic influence. One such is the Jetavanārāma Sanskrit Inscription, which records rules for the administration of certain minor monasteries. As we have seen earlier, Mihintalē too came under the influence of Mahāyānism during the time of Mahāsena in the 4th century when it was occupied by the Dhammarucikas.[3] A fragmentary Sanskrit hymn of about the 8th century A.C. in praise of the three bodies (*trikāya*) of the Buddha found inscribed on a rock near the Selacetiya at Ambasthala in Mihintalē is definite evidence of Mahāyānistic influence.[4] Hence we have some reason to believe that the two Tablets of Mahinda IV at Mihintalē also embody rules that governed a monastery under Mahāyānistic influence. Unfortunately, no similar records have so far been discovered relating to the administration of the Mahā-

1. *E.g.*, See Jetavanārāma Sanskrit Inscription (EZ. I, p. 4 ff.); the two Tablets of Mahinda IV, at Mihintale (EZ. I, p. 84 ff.); Jetavanārāma Slab (No. 2) of Mahinda IV (EZ. I, p. 232) ; Slab of Kassapa V (EZ. I, p. 43 ff.).

2. EZ. I, p. 91, 11. 6–7. *Seygiri–veherhi pere tubū sirit nija Abahay-giri vaherhi sirit nija rusvā genä me veheraṭ me sirit tubuva vaṭī nisiyan hā sasändā-* (".... conferred with competent persons as to the expediency of selecting such of the rules as pleased him out of those (in force) at his own Abhayagiri-vihāra and out of those formerly instituted at Cetiyagiri-vihāra (Mihintalē)."

3. See above pp. 94, 99 for evidence that Dharmarucikas were in occupation of Mihintalē even in later times.

4. CJSc. G. Vol. II, p. 42.

vihāra or any other Theravāda monastery at the time. But there is no reason to suppose that there was, at least in essentials, any great difference between the two systems of administration.

There were rules pertaining to the monks, the employees, and the serfs and, the administration of temporalities. These were laid down by the king with the advice and the approval of the Sangha. Duties were classified and payments and remunerations attached to them were specifically mentioned. All administrative work, such as assigning work for various departments and servants, was done in consultation with the Sangha. Servants could be punished or dismissed only with the approval of the Sangha, and no individual monk had the right to act in such matters.[1] Monks were in charge of the revenue received from the villages and lands granted to the monastery. Accounts were kept daily, and they were again, at the end of each month, entered in the monthly sheet. At the end of the year the annual statement of accounts was placed before the Sangha for approval, and if there were any discrepancies and shortcomings regarding the accounts, inquiries were held by theras who kept the register (*pañjikā*).[2]

All employees of the *ārāma* were paid regularly from its revenues. Every little detail of work necessary for the maintenance of the *ārāma* was very carefully considered and remuneration for each piece of work was assigned. Even such minor servants flower-gatherers were paid definite sums of money regularly.[3] The monks themselves were "paid" for their work. For example, different grades of "payments" were fixed for monks who taught *Vinaya, Sutta and Abhidhamma* and those who looked after the monastery.[4]

Food was prepared in a communal kitchen within the monastery premises.[5] Bhikkhus had to go to the place of distribution

1. EZ. I, p. 85.
2. *Ibid.* I, pp. 4, 87.
3. *Ibid.* I, pp. 87 ff.
4. *Ibid.* I, pp. 85. 87.
5. *Batgē.* In modern Buddhist monasteries in Ceylon it is called *dangē*.

to receive their ration. Raw rice was not given to monks.[1] The distribution of such things as ghee and other medicines also was done at the monastery, and monks had to go usually in order of seniority to the appointed place to receive them.[2]

Monks who led improper lives were not allowed to stay in the monastery. For instance, there seem to have been some monks who had agricultural and commercial interests, others who had landed property, who committed offences against religion and society, who shirked their duty, and who were expelled for offences from their monasteries; such monks were not allowed to remain in the monastery.[3] There were also monks who caused quarrels. One inscription says that if there is a dissension, the food should be given to dogs and crows and not to monks.[4] In case of a dispute between one monk and another, the one who speaks unjustly (*adharmavādin*) was not allowed to reside in the monastery.[5] The inmates of one monastery had no right over another monastery.[6] The Jetavanārāma Sanskrit Inscription lays down that those who render assistance to or associate themselves with other monasteries should not reside in that monastery.[7] This may, perhaps, be interpreted as a sign of sharp difference and jealousy among the various nikāyas at the time.[8]

Lodgings were not granted to any outsiders in the building known as "Water-Pavilion-at-the-Gate" referred to above, either in the upper floor or in the ground floor. Nothing belonging to outsiders was kept there. If anything other than the belongings of servants was kept there, the servants in charge were dismissed and deprived of the maintenance lands (*divel*) in their possession.[8] It has been suggested[9] that this prohibition refers

1. EZ. I, p. 85 ; III, pp. 268 ff. According to the teaching of the Vinaya and the Suttas bhikkhus are prohibited from accepting raw rice (*āmakadhañña*).
2. Smp. III (col. 1900), p. 340.
3. EZ. I, pp. 4–5 ; 86.
4. *Ibid.* III, pp. 258–259.
5. *Ibid.* I, p. 5.
6. *Ibid.* III, p. 103.
7. *Ibid.* I, p. 4, *anyavihāra-sāhāyyaṃ kurvatā'pi na vastavyam.*
8. EZ. III, p. 227.
9. By Paranavitana, EZ. III, p. 228, n. 6.

to royal officers who seem to have made use rather too frequently of monastic buildings as temporary residences. Labourers, cows, carts and buffaloes belonging to the monasteries could not be appropriated by any one. Fines exacted after making due inquiry in the villages belonging to the monastery were handed over to the monastery, and not appropriated by the State.[1]

Trees on monastery grounds could not be felled.[2] Sometimes people would go to the vihāra and ask for trees. Bhikkhus were to refuse them on the ground that they belonged to the Sangha. But if the laymen should insist on getting them, or threaten violence, then they should be asked to take the trees after paying as compensation a reasonable impost, or doing some work for the monastery. "Even a tree of the size of a needle is a major article (*garu-bhaṇḍa*)". Trees could be used, even without permission, to build a residence for monks. Even leaves or flowers or fruits were not to be given to lay people.[3] This kind of prohibition was obviously intended to protect monasteries from intruders from outside.

There were very large communities of monks in the principal monasteries like the Mahāvihāra, the Abhayagiri, the Jetavana, Mihintalē and Tissamahārāma. According to Fa Hien, at the time he visited Ceylon in the 5th century, there were 5,000 monks at the Abhayagiri, 3,000 at the Mahāvihāra and 2,000 at Mihintalē. Further he says that there were about 60,000 monks in the kingdom who got their food from thier common stores, and that the king, besides, prepared elsewhere in the city a common supply of food for five or six thousand more.[4] Hiuen Tsiang (7th century) records on hearsay that at his time there were about 20,000 monks in the country.[5] Even if these figures were not quite accurate they indicate that the number of bhikkhus in the Island was very large.

1. EZ. II, pp. 10-13.
2. *Ibid.* I, p. 87.
3. See VbhA. p. 234 ff.
4. Fa Hien pp. 102, 105, 107.
5. Hiuen Tsiang Bk. XI, p. 247.

The size of the labour force necessary for the tremendous work of maintenance and upkeep of the monasteries can well be imagined. Bhikkhus themselves did a part of the work, such as looking after their own personal needs and cleaning their own cells and courtyards. But for the rest of the work obviously a large army of servants and workers was required. According to the Mihintalē Inscription of Mahinda IV there were more than 200 servants permanently employed for various duties and activities connected with the monastery at Mihintalē itself.

Many kings and queens are reported to have given *ārāmikas* and servants to the Sangha and monasteries.[1] Tamil soldiers taken prisoner by King Silāmeghavaṇṇa (7th century) were given to vihāras as slaves.[2] Sometimes poor people who had no employment became attendants in monasteries in order to make a living with the help of monks.[3] These men were used for odd jobs in the monastery. There is an interesting story in the *Aṅguttara Commentary* of a poor idiot living in a monastery in Rohaṇa at whose expense the monks used to make practical jokes.[4] There was another class of people known as *bhikkhu-bhatikas* living with monks in the vihāra and, as the term signifies, they obviously depended on monks for their living.[5] According to an inscription[6] of the 10th century certain attendants known as *uvasu* or *upāsaka* lived in the monastery.[7] In addition to these community servants were also the personal attendants

1. *E.g.*, Mhv. xlvi 10, 14, 28 ; 164.
2. *Ibid.* xliv 73.
3. *Duggatamanussā saṅghaṃ nissāya jīvissāmāti vihāre kappiyakārakā honti.* (Smp. III (Col. 1900), p. 177).
4. AA. p. 442.
5. Smp. III (Colombo, 1900), p. 222.
6. EZ. III, p. 227.
7. South Indian Tamil Inscriptions refer to a class of temple attendants known as *upāsakas* (EZ. III, p. 228). Even today in buddhist monasteries in Ceylon there are elderly men attending to temple rites and needs of monks, and these attendants are generally known as *upāsakas*. Originally any devout lay Buddhist was known as *upāsaka*, irrespective of his status in life. But later on the meaning was narrowed down and the term means an elderly person, very often a poor elderly person, given to religious activities and frequenting Buddhist temples.

of the important chief monks.[1] The number of servants employed in monasteries was so great that there are instances when, in addition to general grants, villages and revenues were assigned by kings for the specific purpose of maintaining the servants.[2]

For the maintenance and upkeep of a big monastery a regular and substanial income was necessary. This was derived from various sources.[3]

It is common knowledge that the pious always gave their mite towards the maintenance of the Saṅgha, but this was irregular, nor was it fixed. Further, it was not possible for private individuals alone to maintain large monasteries, particularly when the number of resident monks ran into thousands. Other sources of income of a permanent character had therefore to be instituted and it was considered essential that such revenues should cause no hardship to the people. These permanent endowments can roughly be classified into four categories: first, the grant of lands and fields and villages; second, tanks and canals; third, the deposit of paddy and other grains and moneys to be held in trust for the monastery; fourth, the levying of taxes and the collection of fines.

It is difficult to say precisely when these endowments were first established. But most probably the practice was not very much later than the introduction of Buddhism to the Island.[4]

However, the first recorded instance of a grant to a monastery is in the 1st century B.C. when Vaṭṭagāmaṇī is reported to have granted *sangha-bhoga* to the Kupikkala Vihāra of Mahātissa Thera. The grant was written on a *ketaka* leaf.[5] We cannot say definitely what kind of grant is meant by *saṅgha-bhoga*.

1. Mhv. xxxvii 173.
2. *Ibid.* xxxvii 63 ; xlii 23.
3. Read also W.M.A. Warnasuriya's article on *Inscriptional Evidence bearing on the Nature of Religious Endowments in Ancient Ceylon.* UCR. Vol. I, Nos. 1, 2 ; Vol. II, Nos. 1, 2.
4. Mhvg. p. 256 ff. mentions the grant of a village to Pilindivaccha Thera by King Bimbisāra. The villagers in it numbering 500 were regarded as *ārāmikas*, "attendants of the ārāma". This village was granted to the thera by the king as penalty for failure to fulfil a promise he had made to give an *ārāmika* to the thera.
5. Mhv. xxxiii 50.

It may have been a grant of lands or fields or tanks or even income from a village.[1] From this time onwards we come across numerous instances of grants of lands, fields and maintenance villages to religious bodies by kings and queens throughout the centuries.[2] We learn from Fa Hien how some of these lands were granted in the 5th century A.C. : "He (king) then endowed the community of the monks with the population, fields and houses, writing the grant on plates of metal, (to the effect) that from the time onwards, from generation to generation, no one should venture to annul or alter it".[3]

Temple lands formed a source of income not only to the monastery but also to the people who worked on them on the basis of their service to the monastery. Tenants could enjoy them as long as they performed their duty. These lands, fields and villages were free from government taxes and no officers of State could enter them on official business.[4] If anyone entered these lands or villages for protection or asylum, he could not be arrested there. Should there be any unworthy of protection, they could be arrested only after they had been made to quit the temple lands. They could not be arrested by officers within the boundaries of these lands.[5]

This law was very highly honoured and carefully observed. There is a striking story to illustrate how dangerous it was even for an all-powerful king to violate this law. During the time of Udaya III (934-937 A.C.) some officials of the Court fled for fear of the king to Tapovana "the Ascetic Grove".[6] The King and the Uparāja went there and caused their heads to be cut off. In

1. Geiger translates the word *sangha-bhoga* as "lands for the use of the brotherhood". But there is no justification for the assumption that the grant was of lands. *Sangha-bhoga* literally means "possession","revenue" or "wealth for the community".

2. See Mhv. xxxiv, 63 ; xxxv, 83, 117 ff. ; xlvi, 14–16 ; xlix, 21 ; EZ. I, pp. 254–255 ; III, p. 198 ; IV, pp. 114, 143, 173–147, 182–184.

3. Fa Hien, p. 109.

4. EZ. I, pp. 167–169 ; 173–174 ; II, pp. 3–4, 28 ff. ; III, 103–105, 290.

5. EZ. I, pp. 203, 205 ; II, pp. 6–8, 23, 29. Here one is reminded of King Bimbisāra's proclamation that nothing should be done to a person who had joined the Order of the Sangha. (Mhv. p. 87).

6. See above p. 134, n. 3, and below p. 197.

indignation at this violent and unlawful act, the ascetic monks living there left the place and went to Rohaṇa. Thereupon the people and the troops became rebellious, climbed the Ratanapāsāda in the Abhayagiri-vihāra, threatened the king, cut off the heads of some of the officials who had helped in the sacrilegious act at the Tapovana, and flung them out of the window. The Yuvarāja and his friend Ādipāda sprang over the wall, and fled in fear to Rohaṇa. They went to the ascetic monks, threw themselves to the ground at their feet, cried and lamented and entreated the monks to pardon them for their rash deed. Through the intervention of the ascetic monks as well as the other monks of the three nikāyas, a reconciliation between the king and the people and the army was ultimately brought about.[1]

No one could violate or discontinue these religious grants. It is interesting to note here that some inscriptions contain quaint warnings to those who might violate or disturb these grants. One inscription says: "If there be any who shall create disturbance to the fields .... may they not receive food to eat; may they be born as dogs and crows in their next birth."[2] At the end of some of these inscriptions the figures of a dog and a crow are carved in illustration. Another inscription says: "Any one who shall discontinue this (charity) may not be able to raise his hands (in adoration) even if the Perfect Buddha Metteyya (*Metē*) were to pass by his door".[3] Such warnings must have helped a great deal to keep the credulous villagers away from the temple lands. Sometimes these lands were sold, or mortgaged, most probably, in times of distress. There is an instance of Udaya I's queen redeeming such lands.[4]

The number of tanks and canals granted to monasteries by kings and queens and also by private individuals was very large.[5]

1. Mhv. liii 14 ff.
2. EZ. III, p. 198. See also WZ. II, pp. 3–4, *kavuḍu balu vanu.*
3. EZ. III, p. 258. Metteyya is the Buddha to come.
4. Mhv. xlix 26.
5. See Mhv. xxxv 48 ; xxxvi 3 ; EZ, I, pp. 211, 254–255 ; III 116, 154, 165 ; IV 123, 217, 221 ; EZ. IX. p. 227, a lady donates to the Saṅgha a tank which was the property of her family.

King Dhātusena who granted eighteen tanks to the Theriya Sect deserves special mention in this connection.[1] It is to be noted that most of the tanks given to monasteries were village-tanks, forgotten and unknown today. In an agricultural country like Ceylon these tanks and canals formed a valuable source of income, and the revenue derived therefrom by way of water-tax must have been considerable.

Apart from these endowments for the maintenance of ārāmas in general, there were other endowments for specific purposes. Many grants were made for the purpose of looking after ancient dilapidated buildings and effecting repairs to them.[2] We even find grants for providing some particular varieties of food to the Sangha. For instance, an inscription at Rāssahela stipulates that from the income of a certain land nothing but curd, oil and milk should be provided.[3]

With the changes in the economic life of the people, religious endowments began to take on new forms. A number of inscriptions of the 4th and 5th centuries bear witness to this change. During the earlier centuries we saw that religious endowments took the form of lands, fields, villages, tanks and canals. But from about the 4th century A.C. in addition to the old practice, some of the religious endowments took the form of deposits both in kind and in money. This new development was mainly due to the growth of commerce with foreign countries, especially with the Roman Empire. From about the time of Augustus in the 1st century A.C. up to about the fall of Alexandria in the 7th century A.C. a regular and extensive trade in pepper, spices, perfumes, muslins, pearls and precious stones grew up between India and the Roman Empire. Ceylon, too, being a supplier of

1. Mhv. xxxviii, 44–51.
2. EZ. I, pp. 69, 254–255 ; III, p. 218.
3. EZ. IV 173–174 (Inscription III), *dihi tel kir misa an vaḷaj no karana koṭ.*

There are some devotees who wish to offer to monks and monasteries things they (devotees) themselves like most, so that they may be endowed with those things in abundance in their future births. The benefactors in this instance perhaps had a particular fondness for curd, oil and milk. It may also be that this kind of stipulation was necessary to prevent any misuse of the grant.

most of these commodities, was naturally drawn into this stream of trade. A large number of Roman coins found in various seaports in the Island and even in the interior of the country show the extent to which Ceylon had traded with Rome. During this period there were several other countries like Greece and Persia trading with Ceylon.

This new relation with foreign lands had a marked influence on the economic life of the country and the method of distribution and exchange. This does not mean that the old system was replaced by the new. Side by side with the old the new was taking root. The result of the contact with foriegn countries was mainly two-fold : first, an extensive use of metallic currency became popular, and secondly, there sprang up, not only in the capital but also in other trading centres in Ceylon, a number of guilds for the purpose of distribution and exchange—prototypes of modern trading companies and banks. One could deposit grain or money with these guilds and leave instructions with them as to how the interest therefrom should be utilized. We find a number of such religious endowments from about the 4th century A.C. The Tōṇigala Inscriptions[1] of the 4th century can be cited as a significant illustration.

This inscription, dated the 3rd year of Śri Meghavarṇa (362-389 A.C.), is a private document and seems to be an agreement entered into between the donor and the guild. According to this document a person named Deva, son of a Minister of State, deposits with the merchants' guild (*niyama tana*), called Kalahumana, situated in the northern district of the city, two cart loads and ten *amuṇas* of paddy, six *amuṇas* of *undu* (a species of fleminga) and ten *amuṇas* of beans. The capital could not be spent or decreased, but the interest thereon, which was 50% on paddy and 25% on other kinds of grain per annum, should be given towards the expenses of the Ariyavaṃsa-festival held annually at a new monastery called Yahisapavaya. Boiled rice, eatables between breakfast and lunch (*atarakaja*), curd, honey, sweets, sesame, butter, salt, green herbs and other things needed in the kitchen should be provided with this income.

1. EZ. III, p. 177.

This is an interesting example of a deposit in kind as a religious endowment. There are also instances of religious endowments in money.

An inscription from Lahuäṭabändigala[1] says that a person called Sirinaka son of a Minister of State deposited 100 *kahāpaṇas* with the guild of Mahatabaka situated in the eastern district of the city for the use of a great monastery called Devagiri. Here too only the interest on the capital was to be utilized towards the expenses for the Ariyavaṃsa-festival annually. A fragmentary inscription from the same place[2] says that another man called Niṭalaviṭiya Siva deposited 20 *kahāpaṇas* also for the benefit of the Devagiri monastery. Although the conclusion of this inscription is worn out, we can safely conjecture that here too only the interest was spent for the Ariyavaṃsa-festival as in the above instance. An inscription from Kaludiyapokuṇa[3] of the 9th century says that a man named Daḷanā deposited 23 *kaḷaňdas*[4] of gold for the purpose of providing meals for the community of monks at the Dakkhiṇāgiri monastery. Several others were also associated in this matter and each provided a meal to the Sangha.

There was another source of income of a peculiar nature. This was in the form of endowments in money to maintain slaves at monasteries as well as to free them from slavery.

The Buddha had prohibited bhikkhus from accepting male or female slaves (*dāsi-dāsa*).[5] But with the increase of monks and temporalities, slaves came to be employed in monasteries. A passage in the *Samantapāsādikā*[6] clearly says that kings give slaves to monasteries,[7] and that they should not be admitted into the Order of the Sangha, but that they could be admitted only after they were freed. As the acceptance of slaves was against

1. EZ. III, p. 250.
2. *Ibid.* III, p. 251.
3. *Ibid.* III, p. 258.
4. A *kaḷaňda* is a weight equivalent to about 70–72 grains Troy.
5. D. I, p. 49.
6. Smp. III, (Col. 1900) p. 177, *vihāresu rājūhi ārāmikadāsā nāma dinnā honti ; tepi pabbājetuṃ na vaṭṭati ; bhujisse katvā pana pabbājetuṃ vaṭṭati.*
7. We saw earlier that Silāmeghavarṇa had given Tamil prisoners of war as slaves to monasteries. (Mhv. xliv 73).

the injunction of the Buddha, the *Majjhima-nikāya* Commentary[1] laid down that it was not proper to accept slaves as such, but that it was proper to accept them when one says : "I offer a *kappiya-kāraka*, I offer an *ārāmika*."[2]

This seems to have been an ingenious advice to avoid a difficulty, adopted to fulfil not the spirit, but the letter of the law. But the fact that there were actual slaves in monasteries, by whatever ethically convenient name they were designated, is proved beyond doubt by the *Samantapāsādikā* passage quoted above which lays down that they should not be admitted into the Order till they are made free men.

The evidence available shows that slaves, both male and female, were employed in monasteries from early days, and for their maintenance large sums of money were deposited. Eight short inscriptions at Anurādhapura,[3] dating from the 6th to the 7th century A.C., record some grants in money (*kahavaṇas*) by a number of people, whose names are given, for the maintenance of slaves at the Abhayagiri vihāra at Anurādhapura. Six of these

1. MA. p. 404, *dāsidāsavaseneva tesaṃ paṭiggahaṇaṃ na vaṭṭati. Kappiya kārakaṃ dammi, ārāmikaṃ dammīti evaṃ vutte pana vaṭṭati.*

2. *Kappiyakārakas* are, generally speaking laymen who undertake the responsiblity of providing monks with their needs. A *kappiyakāraka* offers his services voluntarily and if his patronage is accepted, the monk thereafter feels himself free to inform the *kappiyakāraka* of his needs without any reserve. The monk is also thereby entitled to feel confident that a *kappiyakāraka* will never give him any gift except in strict accordance with the rules of the Vinaya and the conventions of the people. The *kappiya-kārakas* mentioned in this context, however, seem to have been people provided by others to do the work of the temple, and therefore, in the nature of servants. *Ārāmikas* are attendants and servants of the monastery.

3. EZ. IV. pp. 139–140. The word which is translated by Paranavitana as "slaves" or "slavery" is *vaharala*. It has several variant forms such as *vaharila*, *vaherila*, *veherala*, *viherila*, *vahala*, *varala* etc., in these and other inscriptions. Paranavitana's translation is followed in this discussion. But D. J. Wijayaratne (*Interpretation of Vaharala ect.*, in *Sinhalese Inscriptions*, UCR. Vol. X, No. I, pp. 103 ff.) questions the validity of Paranavitana's translation on several grounds, and offers a new rendering of the term *vaharala* etc. as "timber". (Wijayaratne derives *vaharala* etc. from Skt. **visara+la* meaning "wood" or "timber").

Whether the terms *vaharala* etc. in the inscriptions mean "slaves" or "timber", the historical fact that slaves were employed in Buddhist monasteries in ancient Ceylon remains the same on the strength of the commentarial and chronicle evidence, as seen above. The money paid for *vaharala*, whether it meant "slaves" or "timber", was an income to the monastery–which is the relevant point in this discussion.

men had deposited 100 *kahāpaṇas* each, one of them 1,000, while the other had deposited 2,000. The merit acqruied by these gifts is transferred to all beings.

If granting endowments to maintain slaves at monasteries was considered meritorious, freeing them from slavery was considered even more meritorious. Thus the device of offering slaves to monasteries provided a two-fold way for the acquisition of merits. The gift itself was meritorious, and the redemption of the gift also gave merit to the person who paid the ransom. Both acts benefited the monastery. The *Anāgatavaṃsadesanāva,*[1] a prose work by Vilgammula Mahāthera, at the beginning of the 14th century, says that in order to liberate oneself from evil tendencies one should liberate slaves.

It would seem that offering slaves and liberating them assumed the proportions of a cult, and certain amusing methods of procedure were developed in the pursuit of this cult. While there were real slaves attached to monasteries some of the "slaves" offered and liberated were not slaves at all, but free men of high social status. Most probably they were offered only for a very short time, perhaps for a few hours or minutes, in order to gain "merit".

Offering oneself as a servant to the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha was considered highly religious and meritorious.[2] It was also considered an attempt to practise the virtue of humility. Personal names like Buddhadāsa (servant of the Buddha), popular among Buddhists from ancient times, point to this tendency. King Devānampiya-Tissa is reported to have assumed the role of a gatekeeper for three days to honour the Bodhi branch immediately after it was brought from India.[3] This act is in the same category as the offering of the kingdom of Lankā by this king himself and others to *Sāsana.* It is only a conventional form of expression of respect and honour. Mahādāṭhika Mahānāga (67-79 A.C.) offered himself, his queen, his two sons, his state-elephant and his state-horse to the Sangha, in spite of their

1. *Anāgatavaṃsadesanāva*, p. 42.

2. There are four ways of "taking refuge" in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. One form is called *attasanniyyātana* which means "dedicating, giving over or offering oneself", (AA. I, p. 304). This amounts to putting oneself into the position of a servant of the Triple-Gem.

3. Mhv. xix 32.

(Sangha's) remonstrance, and then redeemed himself and the rest by giving to the Order of Monks various suitable gifts worth six hundred thousand and to the Order of Nuns things worth one hundred thousand.[1] Aggabodhi VIII (801-812 A.C.) made his mother offer him in his own person to the Sangha, then paid "a sum equal to his own value" (*dhanam attagghanaṃ*) and thus became a free man.[2] The king had this done as a punishment for his having called one of his servants "slave" (*dāsa*). There is no doubt that the king was offered as a "slave" to the Sangha by his mother. As to the amount of the "sum equal to his own value" paid to the monastery to liberate the king of Lankā from "slavery" we have unfortunately no information. It could not have been small. Kīrti Niśśaṅka Malla (1187-1196 A.C.) offered his son and daughter to the Tooth Relic and the Alms Bowl of the Buddha and freed them by "offering wealth including a golden casket".[3] These instances clearly show that some of the "slaves" freed were not real slaves.

Inscriptions show that this custom became a very popular religious cult from about the 5th century A.C. up to about the 8th century. Four rock inscriptions from Vessagiriya[4] record instances of various people who obtained freedom from slavery for themselves and for their relatives. One of them liberated his wife from slavery; two liberated their children ; two others liberated themselves. The merit so acquired was transferred to all beings. The two men who liberated their children aspired to Buddhahood as the result of their deed. Even those who liberated themselves transfer the merit acquired thereby to all beings. This clearly shows that to become a slave at a monastery and to obtain even one's own manumission was regarded as being religious and meritorious. The two persons who liberated themselves together paid 100 *kahapaṇas* to the monastery. But we do not know how much was paid by the others.

1. *Ibid.* xxxiv 86–88.
2. *Ibid.* xlix 62–64.
3. EZ. II, p. 107. *Ghana ran dāgabak ätuḷuvū dhana pudā.*
4. *Ibid.* IV, pp. 132–133.

According to an inscription[1] of about the 7th century, at Mädagama Vihāra in the Tisāva Kōraḷē of the Kuruṇāgala District a man liberates his daughters (*dariyana*, Pāli *dārika*) from slavery. This and the previous instance in which a wife is liberated, prove that female slaves worked in monasteries at the time. We also learn from the Mihintalē Inscription of Mahinda IV that female servants were employed in that monastery in the 10th century.

Sometimes several people became "slaves" together and "freed" themselves together. According to an inscription[2] of the time of Dalla-Moggallāna (611-617 A.C.), found at Nilagama in the Mātale District, eight persons in company, whose names are given in the inscription, liberate themselves from slavery on the New Moon day in the month of Vesak by paying hundred *kahāpaṇas* each to Tissārāma at Nilagama.

These instances show that the "traffic in slaves" both genuine and sham, was a lucrative source of income to monasteries.

There was another source of income. An inscription[3] of the 10th century says that a tax was levied for the maintenance of the Mahāpāli, the great common refectory of the Sangha, at the rate of one *pata* (Skt. *prastha*) from each sack of paddy brought into the city of Anurādhapura. We have no information whether similar taxes were levied in other towns as well. Whatever was collected as fines for offences committed within the villages and lands of a monastery was also given to the monastery.[4]

To these many forms of income should be added various smaller contributions made by individuals, both laymen and bhikkhus, towards the maintenance and upkeep of *ārāmas*, e.g., by setting up a pillar or building a flight of steps or granting a stone-boat (*gal-näv*).[5] Distinguished monks personally received special remuneration from kings.[6] These, too, most probably went to the common revenue of the community.

1. *Ibid.* IV, p. 134,
2. *Ibid.* IV, pp. 294–295.
3. *Ibid.* III, p. 133.
4. Slab-inscription of Kassapa V, EZ. I, p. 44.
5. See EZ. III, p. 122 ; IV, pp. 145, 149.
6. Mbv, xxxvii 150, 173.

The income from these various sources made the monasteries extremely rich. A story in the *Vibhaṅga Commentary* reveals that Cittala-pabbata as well as Tissamahā-vihāra each had barns of paddy sufficient for the maintenance of twelve thousand monks for three years.[1] Sometimes, when kings were in difficulty, monasteries were in a position to give them support. Thus, when Saṅghatissa II (611 A.C.) was without food during a troublous period of his reign, the Mahāpāli refectory fed him.[2] The following quotation from Fa Hien will suffice to show how wealthy the monasteries in Ceylon were about the 5th century: "In the treasuries of the monkish communities there are many precious stones and priceless maṇis. Even a king was tempted to take the priceless pearls by force. He confessed this sinful thought later to the monks, and desired them to make a regulation that from that day forth the king should not be allowed to enter the treasury and see (what it contained), and that no bhikshu should enter it till after he had been in orders for a period of full forty years."[3]

Although the larger monasteries were rich there were smaller places not so well provided. Bhikkhus from small *ārāmas* had to go to the Mahāvihāra to get their gruel during the time of Aggabodhi IX (828-831 A.C.). But when the king came to know about this he made grants to those monasteries too.[4]

Little or nothing is known about the maintenance and the administration of a nunnery. But nunneries were in existence in Ceylon from the time Buddhism was introduced to the Island. Devānampiya-Tissa himself built a nunnery in Anurādhapura for Anulā and her women.[5] Both Jeṭṭhā, the queen of Aggabodhi IV (658-674 A.C.) and kassapa V (913-923 A.C.) are reported to have built nunneries.[6] There is no doubt that the system of maintenance and the administration of a nunnery was essentially the same as that of other monasteries.

Inscriptional evidence shows that usually there were hospitals attached to large monasteries and nunneries. Two inscriptions

1. VbhA. p. 314.
2. Mhv. xliv 11. 12.
3. Fa Hien, p. 104.
4. Mhv. xlix 88–90.
5. Smp. (SHB) p. 53.
6. Mhv. xlvi 27 ; EZ. I p. 47.

of the 10th century found at Mäḍirigiriya[1] in the Tamankaḍuva District of the North-Central Province refer to a hospital attached to a monastery. This site, which is very extensive, contains the ruins of the famous ancient Maṇḍalagiri-vihāra.[2] One of the two inscriptions lays down that "the (dead?) goats fowls should be assigned to the hospital of the vihāra".[3] The other inscription which is worn and does not admit of a satisfactory reading, contains such terms as *ved-hal-kämiyan* "employees of the hospital", *ved-hal-dasun* "serfs of the hospital", *ved-samdaruvan* "state physician", *ved-halbadgambim* "villages and lands attached to the hospital", *ved-halbad-kuḍin* "tenants attached to the hospital". Had this record been preserved much valuable information concerning hospitals would have been available. Even the few legible terms given above provide some information. These hospitals had villages and lands set apart for their use, and there were tenants and employees and serfs attached to them under the supervision of state physicians. The Kukurumahan damana Pillar inscription[4] (10th century) refers to a hospital attached to a nunnery called Mahindārāma.[5]

Archaeological remains such as stone medical baths (medicine boats) found near Mihintalē and the Thūpārāma at Anurādhapura and other places indicate that hospitals were attached to monasteries. One can well understand the necessity of attaching a hospital to a monastery which resembled a colony. Whether these temple hospitals were meant only for monks and other inmates, or whether laymen from outside were also admitted into them we do not know.

From the above it will be clearly seen that monasteries in ancient Ceylon were autonomous institutions some of them enjoying large revenues, and that they were centres of earning and culture.

1. E.Z. II, p. 25 ff.

2. Many kings are reported to have constructed buildings at this vihāra See Mhv. xxxvi 17 ; xlvi 29 ; li 75, lx 58.

3. *(Ma) ḷa eḷu kukuḷan veher ved-halaṭ bahā lanu koṭ.*

4. EZ. II, p. 22.

5. Perhaps nuns themselves attended on the sick, like the nursing sisters of today. Attending on the sick is highly praised by the Buddha as a great virtue.

10.

THE MONASTIC LIFE I: ITS DEVELOPMENTS

As we study the *Vinaya Piṭaka* critically we see that the life of monks even as early as in the time of the Buddha began to change in conformity with time and place as social and economic conditions changed.

Bhikkhus originally used to wear only *paṃsukūla cīvara* "rag-robes", i.e. robes made of pieces of cloth thrown away as useless. But later, at the request of Jīvaka, the famous physician, the Buddha allowed monks to accept robes from the laity. When this opportunity was provided, people began to make profuse gifts of robes to the bhikkhus. Sometimes people had to return home with their robes for want of a bhikkhu to accept them at the monastery. When this contingency was brought to the notice of the Buddha, he laid down a rule that a bhikkhu should be appointed as *cīvara-paṭiggāhaka* (robe-receiver) to accept robes offered by the pious. Thus, the office of the robe-receiver was created. But the robe-receivers accepted robes and put them anywhere at all without depositing them carefully in a proper place, and the robes were ruined. Then the Buddha ordered that a bhikku should be appointed as *cīvara-nidahaka* (robe-depositor) to deposit the robes. But there was no suitable place for the purpose, and the robes, heaped up at various places, were eaten by white ants, rats and the like. Thereupon, the Buddha instructed the monks to have a store-room (*bhaṇḍāgāra*). Then, he had to create the post of a store-keeper (*bhaṇḍāgārika*) to look after the store. Difficulties and differences arose among the

bhikkhus when dividing the robes so accumulated. To avoid this unpleasantness the Buddha had to appoint a bhikkhu as *cīvara-bhājaka* (robe-distributor) to distribute the robes suitably among bhikkhus. In this way rules regarding robes increased in number.[1]

Many other examples in the Vinaya show how the original rules were modified by supplementary regulations to meet new situations. The rule relating to *gaṇabhojana* (communal meal), for example, was modified no less than seven times.[2]

Sometimes Vinaya rules were changed to meet local conditions. According to the original rules, ten bhikkhus were necessary for an Act of Upasampadā ; no sandals made of more then one piece of leather could be used ; bathing more frequently then once a fortnight was prohibited ; skins or leather could not be used as seats. While these rules were in force, Mahā-Kaccāyana's pupil So a, who went from Avanti[3] to see the Buddha at Sāvatthi, made an appeal to him on behalf of his teacher : "Sir, bhikkhus are very rare in Avanti. Therefore, please allow the Act of Upasampadā to be performed with a smaller number of bhikkhus. Roads in Avanti are very rough. Therefore, please allow sandals made of more than one piece of leather to be used there. People in Avanti appreciate frequent baths. Therefore, please allow frequent baths there. Just as the people in the Mid-country use mats, so do people in Avanti use skins for sitting . Therefore, please allow the use of skins for sitting there."

On this request the Buddha assembled the Sangha and changed all these rules not only for Avanti, but also for all the countries outside the limits of the Mid-country. Henceforth, bhikkhus outside the Mid-country began to perform the Act of Upasampadā with five monks, including one versed in the Vinaya ; to use sandals made of more than one piece of leather ; to bathe as frequently as they liked, and to use skins for seats.[4]

Once, a famine necessitated the modification of certain rules pertaining to food, for the convenience of bhikkhus. Monks were

1. See Mhvg. *Cīvarakkhandhaka*, p. 337 ff.
2. See Pācit. *Gaṇabhojana sikkhāpada*, p. 74 ff.
3. Ujjain, Gwalior State, Central India.
4. Mhvg. p. 242 ff.

prohibited from keeping foodstuffs, and from cooking meals inside their quarters. They were also forbidden to cook by themselves. But when a famine occurred at Rājagaha, the Buddha was obliged to change these rules.

During the famine people supplied the bhikkhus with necessary foodstuffs. As it was prohibited to keep these inside their living quarters, the bhikkhus had to keep them outside. Cats, rats and various other animals ate them and thieves and hungry people stole them. When this was reported to the Buddha, he allowed monks to keep foodstuffs inside their living quarters. But cooking had still to be done outside. The hungry people began to flock round the place of cooking. This was a great nuisance and the bhikkhus could not take their food in peace. When the Buddha came to know about this, he allowed monks to cook their meals inside their living quarters. But most of the food received during the famine was stolen by the attendants (*kappiyakārakā*), and only a little was given to the monks. When the Buddha discovered this, he allowed monks to cook by themselves. Several other rules pertaining to food were changed during the same famine. But all these changes and modifications were withdrawn when the famine was over, and the old rules were declared valid again.[1]

These few examples show that the institution of Vinaya rules as well as their modification were subject to time and place and were influenced by social and economic conditions.

The Buddha's administration of the Sangha resembled that of a real democratic system.[2] Though, in fact, he was in command of the Sangha, he did not appear to have ever exercised that power.

The *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* reports him as telling Ānanda that he never thought of himself as "managing" the Sangha or of the Sangha as depending on him.[3] Further, he advised the bhikkhus to depend on themselves and the dhamma and not on anything

1. Mhvg. p. 260 ff and pp. 288–289
2. See below p. 169 ff.
3. *Tathāgatassa kho Ānanda na evaṃ hoti : ahaṃ bhikkhu-saṅghaṃ pariharissāmīti vā mamuddesiko bhikkhusaṅghoti vā* (*Mahāparinibbāna-sutta*, D. II, p. 62).

or anyone else as their refuge.[1] "Probably as a member of the clan which favoured democratic constitutions, the Buddha became imbued with democratic ideas. He wanted to see his Sangha grow on democratic lines and formed the rules accordingly."[2]

The Vinaya was not ultimate truth, but only a convention agreed upon for the smooth conduct of a particular community. It had necessarily to be changed in different places at various times according to need. The Buddha, who had realized this, told Ānanda that the Sangha could abolish or amend minor rules if they so desired, after his death.[3]

The question of "minor rules" was raised at the first Council at Rājagaha, which was held within a few months of the Buddha's death. Different opinions were expressed as to what was meant by "minor rules". Ānanda was reproved by the council for not ascertaining from the Buddha what rules the Master meant by the term "minor". No unanimity of opinion was possible on the question.[4] Therefore, on a motion brought forward by the Council's President, Mahā-Kassapa Thera, the Sangha unanimously decided neither to lay down new rules nor to remove any of the existing rules, but to follow the rules that had already been laid down by the Buddha.

1. *Attadīpā viharatha attasaraṇā anaññasaraṇa, dhammadīpā dhammasaraṇā anaññasaraṇā* (*ibid.* p. 62). Some European scholars are inclined to translate this passage as "be ye lamps unto yourselves". (Rhys Davids' *Dīgha Nikāya Translation*, Vol. II, p. 108). But *dīpa* in this context means "island" and hot "lamp". The DA. p. 380 commenting on this word says : *mahāsamuddagataṃ dīpaṃ viya attānaṃ dīpaṃ patiṭṭhaṃ katvā viharatha* "live making yourself an island, a support (resting place) even as an island in the great ocean". *Saṃsāra* is compared to an ocean (*saṃsāra-sāgara*), and what is required in the ocean for safety is an island, and not a lamp. Cf. Dhp. II, 5, *dīpaṃ kayirātha medhāvī yaṃ ogho nābhikīrati* "the wise will create an island which the flood does not overwhelm". The idea of a lamp is, apparently, borrowed from the Bible.

2. Nalinaksh Dutt in *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. I, p. 290.

3. *Ākaṅkhamāno Ānanda saṅgho mamaccayena khuddānukhuddakāni sikkhāpadāni samūhanatu* (*Mahāparinibbāna-sutta*, D. II, p. 95).

4. But the AA, commenting on the word *khuddānukhuddakāni* occurring in another sutta (3, 4, 6) says : *khuddānukhuddakānīti cattāri pārājikāni ṭhapetvā sesasikkhāpadāni* "*khuddānukhuddakāni* means other precepts except the four *pārājikas*." The Commentary makes it clear that this opinion is held by the Masters who use the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* : *imaṃ pana Aṅguttaranikāyaṃ valañjanaka-ācariyā cattāri pārājikāni ṭhapetvā sesāni sabbānipi khuddānukhuddakānīti vadanti* (AA. p. 443).

Mahā-Kassapa's main argument for his resolution was that public opinion would go against them if they removed any rules, however minor they might be. Some of the Vinaya rules, he said, were known to the laity. They also knew what was proper and what was improper for monks. If the Sangha removed any minor rules, there would be people who might say : "Well, Samaṇa Gotama's rules for his disciples seem only to have lasted 'till his funeral pyre smoked' (*dhūmakālikaṃ*). As long as their Master lived they followed rules; now that thier Master is dead, they do not obey them." This was the argument on which Maha-Kassapa's resolution was accepted. It is of great importance that, apart from public censure, he did not give any valid reasons for changing the rules.[1]

From that day to the present time, as far as can be gathered, not a single Vinaya rule was ever changed by the sangha of the Theravāda School ; nor were new rules introduced into the body of the Vinaya. But as time went on, they had to face the realities of life under newly developed circumstances and felt difficulty in following the Vinaya in its original form. But the decision of the Rājagaha Council stood against any change or amendment of the Vinaya. Therefore, without changing the letter of the law and without incurring public censure on which so much emphasis was laid by Mahā-Kassapa, monks discovered ways and means of overcoming difficulty by interpreting the law without compromising themselves. These interpretations and decisions are known under the term *pālimuttaka-vinicchaya*, i.e. decisions not found in the Pāli texts.[2] These are tantamount to amendments and new rules, though they are not considered as such. There are also new ideas and practices accepted by the Sangha though they are not in keeping with the spirit of the original teachings as found in the texts.

The first century B.C. is one of the most important periods in the history of Buddhism in Ceylon. Certain radical changes with far-reaching results pertaining to the life of bhikkhus as well as

1. See Clvg. *Pañcasatikakkhandhaka*, p. 450 ff.

2. Smp. (SHB) p. 551. There is a whole book called *Pālimuttaka-vinayavinicchaya* by Sāriputta of the 13th century. It contains discussions and decisions which are not found in original *Vinaya* texts.

Buddhist doctrines took place during the latter part of that century. We saw[1] that at this time the whole country was violently disturbed by a foreign invasion on one side; on the other, it was ravaged by an unprecedented famine. The whole Island was in chaos. Even the continuation of the oral tradition of the Tripiṭaka was gravely threatened.[2] It was under these circumstances that the far-seeing mahā-theras decided as a last resort to commit the Tripiṭaka to writing at Alu-vihāra, so that the teaching of the Buddha might prevail.

On account of these grave calamities the attitude of monks seems to have undergone a vital change. After the famine, at a conference of several hunderds of monks held at a monastery called Maṇḍalārāma in Kallagāma Janapada, a new question was raised–a question that was never raised before: What is the basis of the *Sāsana*—learning or practice?[3] We all know that according to the original teaching of the Buddha the practice of the dhamma (*paṭipatti*) is of greater importance than mere learning (*pariyatti*). Yet a difference of opinion regarding this fundamental idea seems to have arisen in the minds of the theras.

There were two schools of opinion on the matter : the Paṃsukūlikas maintained that practice was the basis of the Sāsana; but the Dhammakathikas held that learning was the basis.[4] Both sides brought forward arguments and reasons in support of their theories. Ultimately it was decided that learning was the basis of the *Sāsana*, and not practice. The paṃsukūlikas were silenced, and the Dhammakathikas were victorious.[5]

Following this decision, the Commentary on the Anguttara-nikāya records : "Even if there be a hundred or a thousand bhikkhus practising *vipassanā* (meditation), there will be no

1. In the Ch. on Years of Development -I, p. 81.

2. *e.g.*, During this period only one monk knew the Pāli text named the *Mahā-Niddesa*. He was known to be a man of very bad character. Yet the virtuous and learned mahā-theras had unwillingly to learn it from him so that the text might not be lost with his death (Smp. (SHB) p 503).

3. *Pariyatti nu kho sāsanassa mūlaṃ udāhu paṭipattiti*. AA. p. 52.

4. Paṃsukūlikas are those who wear only rag-robes. Dhammakathikas are preachers or teachers learned in the dhamma. For details below p. 195 ff.

5. AA. pp. 52–53.

realization of the Noble path if there is no learning (doctrine, *pariyatti*).[1] The same idea is expressed in the Commentaries on the *Dīgha* and *Majjhima Nikāyas* in the following words: "There may or may not be realization (*paṭivedha*) and practice (*paṭipatti*); learning is enough for the perpetuation of the *Sāsana*. The wise one, having heard the Tripiṭaka, will fulfil even both ...... Therefore, the *Sāsana* (religion) is stabilized when learning endures".[2] The *Vibhaṅga Commentary* also says that it is a great mistake to belittle the value of learning.[3]

But we know that this view expressed in the Commentaries is not in keeping with the original idea as found in the Dhammapada that a person of realization even though he has only a little learning is superior to one who has great learning but no realization.[4] Nevertheless, circumstances seem to have forced the monks to adopt this new attitude.

The value of learning was greatly appreciated as it served some immediate social needs. The meditator lived by himself in seclusion, cut off from society. His usefulness to society was not immediately felt. But the learned made a contribution which society badly needed and highly appreciated. It was but natural therefore that great regard was paid to the learned. Hence, all able and intellectual monks took to learning, and the idea that learning was of greater importance than practice and realization was more firmly established.

Out of this new development seem to have evolved, as a necessary corollary, two vocations termed *gantha-dhura* and *vipassanā-dhura*.[5] *Gantha-dhura* or the vocation of "books" denotes the learning and teaching of the dhamma, while *vipassanā-dhura* or vocation of meditation means reflecting on life as impermanent, suffering and without permanent entity.[6] No such division of

1. *Āraddhavipassakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ satepi sahassepi saṃvijjamāne pariyattiyā asati ariyamaggapaṭivedho nāma na hoti.* (AA. p. 53).

2. *Paṭivedho ca paṭipatti ca hoti' pi na hoti' pi. sāsanaṭṭhitiyā pariyatti pamāṇam. Paṇḍito hi tepiṭakaṃ survā dve' pi pūreti . . . . Tasmā pariyattiyā ṭhitāya sāsanaṃ ṭhiaṃ hoti.* (DA. p. 654; MA. p. 881).

3. VbhA. p. 336. See also Smp. III, (1900) p. 92.

4. Dhp. I, 19–20.

5. *Vipassanā-dhura* is sometimes known as *vāsa-dhura*. AA. p. 22.

6. See DhpA. p. 4.

vocation is known to the original texts. Nor are the terms *gantha-dhura* and *vipassanā-dhura* known to the early texts. A knowledge of the dhamma as well as meditation was part and parcel of a monk's life according to the original conception. This division is found only in the Pāli Commentaries of the 5th century A.C. and other non-canonical works. Acceptance of the new idea that learning is the basis of religion seems to have given rise to this innovation.

Out of the two vocations, *gantha-dhura* was regarded as more important than *vipassanā-dhura*. Examples found in the Commentaries show that almost all able and intelligent monks applied themselves to *gantha-dhura* while elderly monks of weak intellect and feeble physique, particularly those who entered the Order in their old age, devoted themselves to *vipassanā-dhura*.

Thus, Cakkhupāla Thera is reported to have said: "I entered the Order in my old age; I am not able to fulfil *gantha-dhura*. So I will practice *vipassanā-dhura*".[1] Milakkha-Tissa, a hunter of Rohaṇa in Ceylon, entered the Order in his old age, told his teacher: "Sir, learning is a vocation for an able one. My faith is based on suffering. I shall fulfil *vāsa-dhura* (*vipassanā*)".[2]

So saying, Milakkha-Tissa obtained a topic of meditation from his teacher, and devoted himself to what he considered to be meditation, while visiting holy places and attending to external religious duties (*vatta*), one day at Cittala-pabbata, one day at Gamendavāla Mahāvihāra, another day at Kataragama and other places of worship.[3]

As a result of these new developments bhikkhus applied themselves chiefly to study and only secondly to meditation. Even in the study of the Tripiṭaka, the Vinaya Piṭaka which taught *paṭipatti* or practice was regarded as less important than the

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1. *Ahaṃ mahallakakāle pabbajito; ganthadhuraṃ pūretuṃ na sakkhissāmi; vipassanādhuraṃ pana pūressāmi.* (DhpA. p. 4). The author of DhpA. attributes these words to Cakkhupāla as speaking in front of the Buddha. But there was no such division of vocations at the time of the Buddha. It is clear that this was written after the theory of *ganthadhura* and *vipassanādhura* was evolved

2. *Bhante, gantho nāma paṭibalassa bhāro. Mayhaṃ pana dukkhūpanisā saddhā, vāsadhuraṃ pūressāmi.* AA. p. 22.

3. Even today there are monks who follow this kind of life.

Abhidhamma Piṭaka which dealt with problems metaphysical and psychological, although the latter was a Piṭaka of comparatively late development. Hence, the famous Mihintalē Inscription of Mahinda IV lays down that five shares (*vasag*) should be given to the teacher of the Vinaya Piṭaka and seven shares to the teacher of the sutta Piṭaka, while twelve shares should be given to the teacher of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka.[1] The shares given to both teachers of the Vinaya and the Sutta together are given to the teacher of the Abhidhamma alone. This scale of remuneration clearly shows that the teacher of the Vinaya was put into the third grade, while the teacher of the Abhidhamma was in the first grade. This means that intellectual discipline was given a higher place than moral discipline.

Originally *gantha-dhura* meant only the learning and teaching of the Tripiṭaka. But as time went on, the connotation of the term was widened, and it began to embrace languages, grammar, history, logic, medicine and other fields of study as well.[2] Buddhist monasteries became centres of learning and culture, and bhikkhus had to master all subjects that had to be taught to everyone from prince down to peasant. They also wrote on these subjects.

A very interesting and important result of the development of *gantha-dhura* is the writing of the *Mahāvaṃsa* in the 6th century A.C. We learn from various suttas that talks about kings and ministers, rebels and robbers, armies, wars and battles, villages, towns, cities and provinces and the like are denounced by the Buddha as " animal talk" (*tiracchāna-kathā*), and that bhikkhus are prohibited from indulging in such low and mean talk.[3]

The *Mahāvaṃsa*, as we all know, abounds in stories of kings and ministers, rebels and wars, villages and cities and such "animal talk". It was improper for bhikkhus to be engaged in

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1. *Vanavaḷā kiyana biksaṅg-himiyanaṭ kaṅdin piṅdin vasag pasak isā sutatvaḷā kiyana biksaṅg-himiyanaṭ satag satak isā bidamvaḷā kiyana biksaṅg-himiyanaṭ vasag doḷosak isā diyā yutu.* (EZ. I, p. 85). The meaning of the term *vasag* is not yet quite clear. But words *kaṅdin piṅdin vasag* denote that it was a share given "in food and raiment".

2. The Päpiḷiyāna Inscription says that when teachers versed in subjects like logic and grammar are available, those subjects should be studied by paying them "salaries"—*Katikāvat-Saṅgarāva*, p. 46.

3. See *e.g.*, D. I, pp. 6, 51.

such worldly talk. Mahānāma Thera, the author of the *Mahāvaṃsa*, knew it well. Yet he felt he should write the history of the Sinhalese race—a race that was destined to protect the religion of the Buddha. Nevertheless, to indulge in history as such was against the original teaching of the Master. So he discovered a way out of the difficulty.

The Commentaries maintain that at the end of a talk about kings and ministers and such others, if one reflects that even such powerful personages were subject to death and decay, the talk becomes a topic of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*).[1] So, invariably at the end of every chapter of the *Mahāvaṃsa* the author includes a verse containing the idea of the impermanence of life or some spiritual admonition. There is spiritual advice interspersed in suitable places within the body of the chapters, too. And, further, each chapter ends with a formula which says that the *Mahāvaṃsa* was "written for the serene joy and emotion of the pious" (*sujanappasādasaṃvegatthāya kate Mahāvaṃse*). The author seems to have attempted to introduce his work not as a history dealing with the stories of kings and ministers and rebels and wars, but as a religious thesis, "a topic of meditation", intended to teach the impermanence of life and to infuse serene joy and emotion into readers' minds. This was how the learned thera avoided "animal talk!"

The author of the *Dīpavaṃsa*, too, after enumerating the list of names from King Mahāsammata down to Prince Siddhattha, suddenly inserts the verse beginning with *aniccā vata saṅkhārā*,[2] signifying the impermanence of worldly things, as if he had recited the whole list of names of the Mahāsammata dynasty in order to prove the impermanence of things! This, too, was in conformity with the idea expressed in the Commentaries.

We learn from the Pāli Commentaries and other works that there were monks who were experts even in medicine.[3] Although,

1. DA. p. 65.
2. Dpv. v. 49.
3. The *Bhesajjamañjūsa* by Pasmula Mahāsāmi, the *Yogarṇava* and *Prayogaratnāvalī* by the Principal of Mayūrapāda Pariveṇa (13th century) are some of the later works of medicine written by Buddhist monks. To the *Bhesajjamañjūsa* there is a Sinhalese paraphrase by Välivița Piṇḍapātika Saraṇaṅkara.

according to the original texts, monks were not expected to practise medicine,[1] the Commentaries allow them to treat co-celibates, certain very close relations such as parents, and some others intimately connected with them in their monastic life.[2]

The accomplishment of monks in the sphere of learning, including a knowledge of the law of the land, seems to have been so complete that a thera named Ābhidhammika Godatta of the Mahāvihāra was raised by King Bhatiya (38-66 A.C.) to a position virtually equal to the office of the Chief Justice of Ceylon.[3] Godatta was an acknowledged specialist both in the Vinaya and the Abhidamma. The king who was greatly pleased with the judgment given by the thera in an ecclesiastical case, issued an edict by beating of drum declaring: "As long as I live, judgments given by Ābhidhammika Godatta Thera, in cases either of monks, nuns or laymen, are final. I will punish him who does not abide by his judgment."[4]

Not only literature, but also the fine arts were included in the sphere of interest of bhikkhus engaged in *ganthadhura*. Ānanda K. Coomaraswamy observes: "Buddhism became indeed the chief patron rather than the opponent of fine arts, which spread with it from India to Ceylon, Burma, Siam and Java in the south, and to China and Japan in the north. It thus came to pass that it was important for even the priests to have some knowledge of the theoretical side of craftsmanship at least, and this was often the case; they were rather expected to explain

1. See D. I, pp. 9, 54. *Brahmajāla* and *Sāmaññaphala suttas.*
2. Smp. (SHB) pp. 335–336.
3. *Ibid.* pp. 220–221.
4. *Mayi sante bhikkhūnampi bhikkhunīnampi gihīnampi adhikaraṇaṃ Ābhidhammika Godattattherena vinicchitaṃ suvinicchitaṃ. Tassa vinicchaye atiṭṭhamānaṃ rājāṇāya ṭhapemi.* (Smp. (SHB) p. 221). It is not certain whether Godatta ever acted as a judge in secular matters. The king's declaration may be regarded as an expression of his recognition of the thera's wisdom and knowledge of the law and his high qualities. This also is an indication of the high esteem in which the thera was held by the public. Even if the thera had presided over any secular cases, there is no doubt that he would not have passed any judgment involving capital punishment or physical torture. There were even kings who prohibited physical torture and capital punishment.

such works as *Sāriputra* to the less learned craftsman than to learn from him. In the eighteenth century there were even craftsmen amongst the priesthood."[1]

The *Cullavagga* reports the notorious Chabbaggiya monks as having caused male and female figures to be painted in their Vihāra. But the Buddha prohibited it, and allowed only such designs as creepers and flowers to be painted.[2] The Commentary elaborates this idea and says that it is wrong for bhikkhus to make or cause others to make not only male and female figures of human beings, but also of animals, even of an earth-worm (*gaṇḍuppada*). A bhikkhu should not request anyone to make even the figure of a gate-keeper (*dvārapāla*).[3] But the Commentary[4] allows a certain measure of latitude by sanctioning the painting or moulding of such topics as Jātaka stories and such events as special alms-givings, which are apt to produce serene joy (*pasāda*) and emotion (*saṃvega*).[5]

Thus, bhikkhus are encouraged to decorate their vihāras with various Jātaka stories and events of the life of the Buddha, with the idea of infusing "serene joy" and "emotion" into the minds of the pious. At the same time, monks were not unaware of the reality that vihāras with beautiful paintings and statues attracted multitudes of pilgrims, who made valuable offerings to the place. This was also an incentive for monks to make their vihāras attractive aesthetically and artistically.

It seems that, by about the 5th century A.C., the Sinhalese monk was unequalled in the art of sculpture.[6] According to a Chinese account, a certain Sinhalese monk called Nan-té (Nanda) was sent on an embassy in the year 456 A.C. to the Emperor of China, and the thera on this occasion took with him

1. *Mediaeval Sinhalese Art*, p. 47.

2. Clvg. p. 247.

3. Figures of gate-keepers, *dvārapāla*, at the entrance to monasteries are very common.

4. Smp. III, (Colombo 1900), p. 309.

5. It is obvious that in depicting stories, figures of men and women and animals have to be painted or moulded. But they could be excused if they produced *pasāda* and *saṃvega*. Cf. the formula at the end of each chapter of the Mhv. referred to above.

6. The world-famous Sigiriya paintings also belong to the 5th century.

three statues of his own making as gifts to the Chinese Emperor. According to the historian of the Wei Tartar dynasty, 386-556 A.C., people from the countries of central Asia, and the kings of those countries, emulated each other in sending artisans to procure copies of the statues, but none could rival the productions of Nan-té. On standing about ten paces distant they appeared truly brilliant, but the lineaments gradually disappeared on a nearer approach.[1]

We have seen earlier that when the community of monks began to grow numerically and their services to the country were regarded as essential, large and numerous endowments were made over to monasteries for their maintenance. These temporalities wrought further changes in the life of the Sangha. If the monks were to make use of the landed property of the monastery with an easy conscience, it had to be "religionized".

To regularize the new situation the Sangha had to agree upon a new Vinaya convention, and had to invent a new practice known as "*lābha-sīmā*". Therefore, the *Samantapāsādikā* says: "As for *lābha-sīmā* (income area), it was neither allowed by the Buddha nor established by the theras who collated the dhamma (in Council). But kings and ministers after building a vihāra define (boundaries within a distance of) a *gāvuta*, half a *yojana* or a *yojana* around (the place), and set up pillars inscribed with the names saying 'this is the income-area (or limit) of our vihāra', and fix boundaries saying 'whatever is produced within this, all that we give to our vihāra'. This is called *lābha-sīmā*."[2]

1. *Ceylon* by Tennent, Vol. I, pp. 615, 620.
Paintings at Degaldoruva and Ridīvihāra were done by a Sinhalese monk named Devaragampola Silvatenne (*sic.* But correctly Silvat Tāna) Unnanse, "the most famous painter of the late 18th century". These paintings which have attracted the attention of many a critic of art, were executed under the supervision of Moratoṭa Mahānāyaka Thera of Malvatta Vihāra (Coomaraswamy : *Mediaeval Sinhalese Art*, pp. 47, 59, 168). The founder of the Vidyālaṅkāra Piriveṇa, Ratmalānē Sri Dharmāloka Mahāthera (1828–1887) is said to have painted several vihāras in Sat-Kōraḷē (Koṭahēnē Prajñākīrti : *Srī Dharmāloka Charitaya* (1937), p. 8).

2. Smp. III, (Colombo 1900, p. 260. *Lābhasīmā nāma neva Sammā sambuddhena anuññātā, na dhammasaṅgāhakattherehi ṭhapitā : api ca kho rājarājamahāmattā vihāraṃ kāretvā gāvutaṃ vā aḍḍhayojanaṃ vā yojanaṃ vā samantato paricchinditvā ayaṃ amhākaṃ vihārassa lābhasīmā'ti nāmalikhitake thambhe nikhaṇitvā yaṃ, etthantare uppajjati sabbaṃ taṃ amhākaṃ vihārassa demā'ti sīmaṃ ṭhapenti, ayaṃ lābhasīmā nāma.*

Ancient pillar inscriptions in Ceylon granting endowments to monasteries seem to have been established in accordance with this practice. On the occasion of setting up such pillar inscriptions, which in Sinhalese are called *attāṇi kaṇu*, high officials of State representing the king came in person to the spot to give authority to the grant. It is, however, curious that the term *lābha-sīmā* is not found in any one of the numerous ancient inscriptions which grant lands to monasteries. But the words *sīmā ätuḷu koṭ* "having defined the boundaries" are included in some of these lithic records, and perhaps they could be interpreted as conveying the idea of *lābha-sīmā*.[1]

Now that landed property was recognized and sanctioned by the Vinaya conventions, monks had very good reasons to be interested in the income and expenditure of the monastery. We find, as we have seen before, that annual statements of accounts had to be submitted to the assembly of the Sangha for approval.[2]

A number of such practices which are against the spirit of the original teachings of the Buddha began to follow in their train as the inevitable result of this change in the economic life of the Sangha. We have seen earlier how slaves, both male and female, were admitted as monastic servants.[3]

A large number of practices that the new situation demanded were against the original Vinaya. Monks had not the authority and the courage to change the Vinaya rules against the decision of the Rājagaha Council. Nor were they able to ignore the new situation. They were placed on the horns of a dilemma. Some of the examples given below will show how ingeniously they got over the difficulty without going against the letter of the law, though in fact their solutions were quite countary to the spirit of the teaching.

According to the Vinaya, a bhikkhu should not dig or tell another to dig the earth. If he does so he commits an offence

1. See EZ. I, pp. 167–168, Īripinniyāva pillar Inscription ; p. 173, Rambāva Pillar Inscription ; III, pp. 103–105, Mannar Kacceri Pillar Inscription.

2. See above p. 137.

3. See above p. 147.

called *pācittiya*.[1] But this was too hard to follow when there was regular landed property attached to the monastery. Therefore, in the course of commenting on this rule, the *Samantapāsādikā* gives an interesting decision as a *pālimuttaka-vinicchaya*.[2] It says: "This is a decision not found in the text : If one says, 'dig a pond,' it is proper ; for only a place dug out is called a pond. Therefore it is a proper usage. This is the rule in other matters such as 'dig a tank, a lake, a pit'. But it is not proper to say, 'dig this place, dig a pond in this place'. It is proper to say, 'dig yams, dig roots' without specifying. It is not proper to say, 'dig this creeper, dig yams or roots in this place'."[3] This is nothing but a jugglery of words to get over the difficulty.

We saw that irrigation tanks formed one kind of endowments to monasteries yielding considerable income. But according to the Commentary[4] a tank should be accepted by the Sangha only when the donor offers it with the proper formula. If one simply says: "I offer a tank to the Sangha", it should not be accepted. A tank should be accepted when it is offered to the Sangha for the purpose of enjoying the four requisites (*cattāro paccaye*). Certain inscriptions granting tanks to monasteries, in conformity with this convention, actually contain the required words stating the intention that they were granted to the Sangha for the purpose of the four requisites.[5] But there are at the same time inscriptions granting tanks without these "proper" words. Some of these grants of tanks and canals have been made without

1. Pācit. p. 37. *Yo pana bhikkhu paṭhaviṃ khaṇeyya vā khaṇāpeyya vā pācittiyaṃ.*

2. This term was explained earlier, p. 157.

3. Smp. (SHB) p. 551. *Ayaṃ Pālimuttakavinicchayo : pokkharaṇiṃ 'khaṇāti vadati, vaṭṭati ; khatāyeva hi pokkharaṇī nāma hoti. Tasmā ayaṃ 'kappiyavohāro. Eseva nayo vāpiṃ taḷākaṃ āvāṭaṃ khaṇāti ādisupi. 'Imaṃ okāsaṃ khaṇa, imasmiṃ okāse pokkharaṇiṃ khaṇāti" vattuṃ pana na vaṭṭati. "Kandaṃ khaṇa, mūlaṃ khaṇāti", aniyametvā vattuṃ vaṭṭati. 'Imaṃ valliṃ khaṇa, imasmiṃ okāse kandaṃ vā mūlaṃ vā khaṇāti" vattuṃ na vaṭṭati.*

4. Smp. (SHB) p. 490.

5. *e.g.*, EZ. I, p. 211, Pālumäkiccåva Inscription of Gajabāhu I (174–196 A.C.)—*bukasagahaṭaya catiri paceṇi-;* EZ. III, p. 116, Thūpārāma Slab Inscription of Gajabāhu I –*catara paca paribujana koṭu dine* ; EZ. IV p. 123, Nāgarikanda Rock Inscription of Kumāradāsa (513–522 A.C.)–*bikasagahaṭa catarapacayaṭa dine.*

mentioning any specific purpose.[1] Perhaps the "proper" words were used orally when the grant was made, though the inscriptions do not contain them.

Once ecclesiastical property was recognized as a necessity for the perpetuation of the religion, it was obviously the duty of the Sangha to protect it. Therefore, the bhikkhus are advised to entertain even rebels and robbers and rowdies with the property of the Sangha, if it was considered necessary to do so in order to protect the wealth of the monastery. We have seen elsewhere[2] how Abhaya Thera, chief monk of Mihintalē, entertained a rebel who came to plunder the monastery. Other monks blamed the thera for his action. But he proved to them that by it he saved the wealth of the monastery from the rebels, and that what he spent in treating them was even less than the value of one rug spread in the *cetiyaghara* there. The critics were convinced. At the end of the story, the *Samantapāsādikā* says that an intelligent monk should act in that manner.[3]

We have seen that there were monks who were experts in medicine. It was only natural that people intimate with them should go to such monks for medical advice. But monks were not expected to treat each and everyone. Nevertheless, they could not say that they did not know medicine, nor could they refuse people and turn them out. They were obliged to arrive at a compromise.

If a layman requests a monk to treat a patient or prepare some medicine, the request should not be complied with. Laymen should know the "proper" way of consulting a monk. If a layman were to inquire from a monk as to what is given for a certain ailment, then it is proper to tell him. If a man says to a monk: "Sir, my mother is ill; please prescribe some medicine", he should not be told anything. But bhikkhus may start a conversation among themselves about what they gave to a certain

1. *e.g.*, EZ. III, p. 154, Inscription of Bhātika Abhaya (38–67 A.C.) ; p. 165, Vihāregala Rock Inscription (2nd century A.C.); EZ. IV p. 217, Habässa Rock Inscription (2nd century A.C.) ; p. 227, Tim̃biriväva Rock Inscription (4th century A.C.).

2. See above p. 135.

3. Smp. (SHB) pp. 338–339.

monk when he was suffering from the identical illness. If the man listens to the conversation and treats his mother accordingly there is nothing wrong.[1]

An interesting story given in the *Samantapāsādikā*[2] as an illustration may be cited. When the queen of Vasabha (127-171 A.C.) was ill, a woman went to Mahā-Paduma Thera and asked him to prescribe some medicine for her. But the thera who was an expert in the Vinaya, did not say that he did not know medicine, but began to converse with other bhikkhus in the manner described above. The woman learnt the prescription from their conversation, and the medicine was administered to the patient. When the queen was cured, they brought three robes with 300 *kahāpaṇas*, and placing them at the feet of the thera, said : "Sir, use these for offering flowers " (*puppha-pūjā*). Mahā-Paduma, thinking it was "the teacher's share" (*ācariya-bhāgo*)[3] had the money taken charge of and made use of it for offering flowers.[4]

Such examples as those given above illustrate how monastic life developed on new lines as a result of economic and social change. These instances can be multiplied many times. We have seen in earlier chapters how bhikkhus had to be interested in social and political affairs as a result of Buddhism becoming the State religion in Ceylon.

With regard to the administration, there was neither a chief monk nor a central organization controlling the Sangha of the

1. See *Ibid.* pp. 336–337.

2. *Ibid.* p. 337.

3. *Ācariya-bhāga* can be regarded as a token of gratitude for advice given.

Once an old brāhmaṇa, acting on the advice of the Buddha, succeeded in a personal matter, and offered a pair of garments to the Buddha as *ācariya-bhāga* for his advice, and the Buddha accepted the gift. It is significant that the term used in this connection in the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* is *ācaryia-bhāga*. (S. p. 110).

4. Mahā-Paduma's acceptance of this money violates the Vinaya rule *Rūpiya-sikkhāpada.* It lays down that a bhikkhu should neither accept, nor cause another to accept, nor allow to deposit for him any money (gold or Silver) : *Yo pana bhikkhu jātarūparajataṃ uggaṇheyya vā uggaṇhāpeyya vā upanikkhittaṃ vā sādiyeyya nissaggiyaṃ pācittiyaṃ* (Pārājika, p. 277). This apparent violation is curious in view of the fact that Mahā-Paduma once refused as improper (*na kappatīti*) to accept a golden casket (*suvaṇṇa-cetiya*) sent to him by Uttara-Rāja-putta. (Smp. (SHB) p. 388). The thera was celebrated as an expert in the Vinaya.

whole Island. After the Buddha there was no supreme authority to issue orders or instructions to the Sangha. To have a head of the Sangha or a Leader (*Nāyaka*) is against the spirit of the original teaching of the Buddha. We have seen earlier that the Sangha was organized as a democratic body. The Buddha, immediately before his death, told his constant attendant: "Ānanda, you might think like this: The teaching is without the Master, and we have no Master ; but Ānanda, you should not think so ; whatever dhamma and vinaya is taught and declared by me, that will be your master after my death".[1] Thus the Sangha, after the death of the Buddha, regarded the teaching as their "Leader", and not an individual.

A few months after the passing away of the Buddha, we find an enlightening conversation between Ānanda and Vassakāra, the Prime Minister of Magadha, which elucidates the authoritative Buddhist attitude to the organization and administration of the Sangha.

Vassakāra inquires from Ānanda whether the Buddha had appointed any bhikkhu to be their "refuge" (*paṭisaraṇaṃ*), whom they should now fall back upon (*etarahi-paṭidhāveyyātha*) after the death of the Master. Ānanda says "no" . Then Vassakāra asks Ānanda whether the Sangha had appointed any bhikkhu to be their refuge whom they should now fall back upon after the Buddha's death. Ānanda's answer is again in the negative.

Then the Prime Minister remarks: "Venerable Ānanda, when there is no refuge (*appaṭisaraṇe*) what is the basis for unity (*ko hetu sāmaggiyā*)?"

Ānanda rejoins: "Brāhmaṇa, we are not helpless (not without refuge); we have a refuge, we have the refuge of the dhamma (*dhammapaṭisaraṇā*)."[2]

When the statesman expressed his inability to appreciate this novel character in an organization, Ānanda offered an explanation:

1. *Siyā kho pan' Ānanda, tumhākaṃ evam assa ; atītasatthukaṃ pāvacanaṃ, natthi no satthāti. Na kho pan' etaṃ Ānanda, evaṃ daṭṭhabbaṃ. Yo kho Ānanda, mayā dhammo ca vinayo ca desito paññatto, so vo mamaccayena satthā.* (*Mahāparinibbāna-sutta*, D. II, p. 94).

2. Cf. above p. 170.

There are the rules for bhikkhus laid down, and the code is recited (*pātimokkhaṃ uddiṭṭhaṃ*) by the Master. Monks who live in a certain geographical area assemble together on *uposatha* days and request one of the monks, on whom the turn falls, to recite it. If a transgression on the part of any bhikkhu is announced at this recitation, the other monks deal with him according to the dhamma (law). No one compels them to do this, only the dhamma causes them to do this.

Then the Chief Minister poses another question: "Venerable Ānanda, is there now any bhikkhu whom you respect, honour, revere and esteem, and on whom you depend?"

When Ānanda answers this question in the affirmative, Vassakāra was confounded. He exclaims : "When I asked you whether the Buddha or the Order of Monks had appointed a leader whom they should follow after the death of the Master, you said "no". Now when I ask you whether there is any monk whom you respect and on whom you depend, you say 'yes'. How am I to understand this?"

Ānanda explains that the Buddha had praised ten qualities that inspire confidence (*dasa pasādaniyā dhammā*),[1] and if they found those ten qualities in a monk, him they would respect, honour, revere, esteem and on him they would depend.

Vassakāra expresses his satisfaction at the position explained by Ānanda.[2]

Ānanda's answers to Vassakāra's questions form an authentic exposition of the constitution and administration of the Sangha. First, there is no leader or head of the Sangha. But the members of the community would always respect and follow any member who is virtuous, wise and learned. Secondly, there is no centralization of authority and power. They maintained their unity and discipline as groups in different areas. The Sangha denoted the community of bhikkhus, and if a group was composed at least

1. Ten qualities : (1) virtuous (*sīlavā*), (2) learned (*bahussuto*), (3) satisfied (*santuṭṭho*), (4) possessed of four *jhānas*, (5) possessed of *iddhi* (miraculous) powers, (6) possessed of divine are (*dibbasotadhātu*), (7) power to see others' thoughts, (8) power to remember past lives (*pubbe nivāsaṃ anussarati*), (9) power to see deaths and births of beings (*dibbacakkhu*, and (10) freedom from all *āsavas* (arahantship).

2. See *Gopaka-Moggallāna-sutta*, M. III, p. 49 ff.

of four monks, that group had the authority to represent the Sangha and could perform certain Vinaya acts independently of other groups.[1]

But these groups had no identity of their own. Wherever they lived, they followed the same constitution and rules which were common to all. Different groups in different areas heard their cases and settled their disputes in the same manner according to the Vinaya. An elder who was learned, virtuous and wise was accepted as the president or head of the group or assembly for the occasion. If two or more groups from different areas got together, they all formed automatically one assembly under one president for the occasion. There was no compulsion and everything was voluntary. If a disagreement arose among the Sangha with regard to the theory or practice of the teaching of the Buddha, then the unity (*sāmaggi*) of the Sangha which was so highly valued was disturbed, and then occasion was given for the rise of different sects and nikāyas.

Bhikkhus in Ceylon during the Anurādhapura period evidently followed the same old practice without any vital change.

In ancient Ceylon, there were two great Convocations held twice a year before and after the *vassa* (rainy) season in two central places. One was the Mahāvihāra at Anurādhapura and the other was the Tissamahāvihāra in Rohaṇa. The monks to the north of the Mahaväli-gaṅga assembled at the Mahāvihāra and those to the south of the river at the Tissamahāvihāra. The purpose of these Convocations was manifold. They assembled before the *vassa* season to clean and whitewash the *cetiya*, and also to meet celebrated mahā-theras to obtain topics of meditation from them. After the *vassa* season they met again to announce their spiritual attainments during the "retreat" and also to recite and revise their learning of the dhamma. On these occasions they had the opportunity to clear their doubts by discussing difficult points with experts. The practice of holding a great Convocation twice a year was evidently started in the time of the Buddha himself.[2]

1. *Sabbantimena paricchedena cattāro bhikkhupakatattā.* (Pmk. p. 2 ; also PmkA. p. 4.)

2. DA. p. 406.

11.

THE MONASTIC LIFE II : ITS ACTIVITIES

With the help of casual references scattered in various places we can get a fair picture of the life monks led in ancient Ceylon.

THE DAILY ROUTINE[1]

Bhikkhus were generally expected to awake early in the morning before sunrise. Then they should reflect on the four topics of meditation known as *caturārakkhā* (Sinhalese, *sivu arak* "four protections"), namely, meditation on the Buddha, *mettā* (loving kindness), *asubha* (impurity of the body) and *death*. At least we know that this practice was followed in the 10th century at Mihintalē. There is no reason to think that it was not so in other places, both before and after the 10th century, for it has come down as a tradition among the Sangha up to the present day.

After this cursory meditation, monks should clean their teeth and attend to their ablutions. According to certain Commentarial accounts, they should attend early in the morning to their duties such as sweeping and cleaning the compounds and other places and worshipping at the cetiya and the Bodhi. But the Mihintalē Inscription of Mahinda IV does not mention this. Its injunction is that after ablutions monks should dress and drape their robes carefully according to the instructions given in the *Sikha-karaṇī* (Rules of *Sekhiyā*), go to the Ration room (*Lahāg*)

1. See Mihintalē Tablets of Mahinda IV, EZ. I, p. 85 ; AA. p. 351 ; MA. p. 100.

and recite the *Metta-sutta* (Met-Pirit).[1] Then they should get down to the refectory and receive their breakfast or morning meal. If any monks are unable to go to the Ration Room through illness, their share should be sent up if so recommended by the physicians.[2]

In one account in the *Aṅguttara Commentary*[3] no morning meal is mentioned at all. But that evidently refers to monks devoted to meditation. They are instructed to go on with their meditation (*samāpatti*) till they get up to go for the alms-round ; then again after their meal they should sit up meditating till they have, in the evening, to attend to their other duties at the cetiya and towards the elders; after this they should spend the first watch of the night again in meditation.

Important items of the time-table, like going out for *piṇḍapāta*, were announced by beating a drum (*bheri*) or gong (*yāma-gaṇḍi*). Thus, at the Kälyāṇi Mahāvihāra the time was announced by beating a drum, but at the Vajagaragiri-vihāra by striking a gong. There was a *kālatthambha* "time-pole" (most probably a pole with a sun-dial fixed on it) to measure the time during the day. But there was another contrivance called *yāma-yanta* "watch-machine" announcing the time even during the night, when properly set. It seems to have struck hours like a clock (*yāma-yantaṃ paṭati*). Either the attendants (*ārāmikā*) or some monks were entrusted with the duty of announcing the various items of the time-table. At Kalyāṇi, attendants seem to have done it, whereas at Vajagaragiri a thera called Kāladeva was in charge of beating the gong, particularly during the *vas* season. Kāladeva was so clever at sensing the correct time, it is said, that unlike other monks he always used to beat the gong without the help of the "watch-machine". When he stood with the club (*muggara*)

1. Wickramasinghe's translation of the words *met pirit koṭ* as "exercising a spirit of benevolence and reciting *paritta* formulas " (EZ. I, p. 99) is evidently due to a want of familiarity with Buddhist terminology. *Met-Pirit* is only another name for the *Metta-sutta* in the *Suttanipāta*. It is included in the *Parittas* as well, and the term *Met-pirit* is used when this sutta is treated as a *paritta*.

2. No second or mid-day meal is mentioned in this inscription.

3. AA. p. 351.

to strike the gong or before he had struck one or two strokes, invariably the "watch-machine" also began to strike. The three watches of the night were thus announced by the thera.[1]

Food

A considerable portion of the forenoon of a monk had to be spent in connection with his food, which he could obtain in several ways. There were common refectories attached to large monasteries like the Mahāvihāra, the Abhayagiri and Minhitalē. Thousands of bhikkhus went to these places for food.

Fa Hien gives an eye-witness's account: "They get their food from their common stores. The king, besides, prepares elsewhere in the city a common supply of food for five or six thousand more. When any want, they take their great bowls, and go (to the place of distribution), and take as much as the vessels will hold, all returning with them full."[2]

About two centuries later, Hiuen Tsiang gives us an account on hearsay: "By the side of the king's palace there is built a large kitchen, in which daily is measured out food for eight-thousand priests. The meal-time having come, the priests arrive with their pātras to receive their allowance. Having received and eaten it, they return, all of them, to their several abodes. Ever since the teaching of the Buddha reached this country, the king has established this charity and his successors have continued it down to our times."[3]

The *Rasavāhinī* corroborates the accounts of these Chinese pilgrims when it says that from five great monasteries (*pañca-mahāvāsa*) monks and nuns assembled at Maha-pāli for alms.[4]

The time they had to spend in walking to and from the refectory and in waiting for their turn at the place of distribution must have been fairly long. But they were not in a hurry.

There were monks who did not go to the common refectory but went round from house to house for alms. That probably took even a longer time than going to a refectory. Some monks

1. MA. p. 100.
2. Fa Hien, p. 105.
3. Hiuen Tsiang Bk. XI, p. 250.
4. Rsv. II, p. 51.

used to walk from Mihintalē to Anurādhapura for *piṇḍapāta*.[1] When a bhikkhu goes on *piṇḍapāta*, he is advised not to walk fast.[2] Certain bhikkhus, perhaps many of them, went on *piṇḍapāta* twice a day—early in the morning and once again before noon.[3] It is common knowledge that often monks were invited by pious laymen for meals at their houses too. Sometimes a bhikkhu went on *piṇḍapāta* particularly for ghee or oil, and on such occasions, they carried a *thālak* (a small bowl) and not the usual alms-bowl.[4]

Between the two meals, sometimes, there was light refreshment with some snacks called *antara-khajjaka*.[5] This consisted of such things as honey (*madhu*) and jaggery (*sakkhara*). Sometimes even perparations of meat were included. A story in the *Rasavāhinī* relates how a *seṭṭhi* entertained monks three times in the forenoon with delicious preparations including hare (*sasa-maṃsa*). A special preparation of hare was included in the *antara-khajjaka* as well as in the other two meals.[6] We learn from the Tōṇigala Inscription that the diet of monks in Ceylon in the 4th century A.C. included among other things, curd (*dī*), honey (*miyavaṭa*) treacle (*peṇi*), sesame (*tila*), butter of ghee (*bu(ja)natela*), salt (*loṇa*) and green herbs (*palahavaṭa*).[7]

We know that originally the monks were expected to have only one meal a day. Hence a bhikkhu was called *eka-bhattika* "one-mealer". But the Commentarial interpretation of the term *eka-bhattika* is loose and very generous. According to that, there are two meals—breakfast (*pātarāsa-bhatta*) and supper (*sāyamāsa-bhatta*). Breakfast is confined to the forenoon. The other meal is confined to the period between the noon and the

1. Vsm. p. 16. A thera called Mahā-Tissa used to go from Cetiyapabbata (Mihintalē) to Anurādhapura for *piṇḍapāta*. The city of Anurādhapura could not have been too far away from Mihintalē. Or did the capital extend near Mihintalē ?

2. DA. p. 133 ; MA. p. 210.

3. Vsm. p. 67.

4. *Sahassavatthu : Saṅghāmaccassa vatthu* ; Rsv. II, p. 176.

5. Tōṇigala-Inscription calls it *atarakaja*, EZ. III, p. 178.

6. Rsv. II, p. 128 ; MṬ. II, p. 519 ; Prmj. II, (PTS) p. 104.

7. EZ. III, p. 178.

sunrise. Therefore, says the Commentary, if a monk eats even ten times during the forenoon, he is regarded as an *eka-bhattika* eating only one meal a day.[1] Although there seem to have been some monks who strictly followed the principle of one meal a day even in later times, the vast majority of them seem to have had more than one meal during the forenoon. In the evening the monks usually had some drink, or even ghee or treacle as refreshment.[2]

VARIOUS DUTIES

In their routine of work, bhikkhus were expected to attend to various activities. They had to make their robes, wash and dye them ; attend to duties at the cetiya, Bodhi and Uposatha houses; even make brushes (*koccha*) and ladders (*nisseṇi*) and white-wash (*sudhā-kamma*) the cetiya.[3] But they were not expected to devote their whole time to these activities for they would then be guilty of *kammārāmatā* "addiction to activities". Therefore, they are advised to distribute their time properly in studies, recitation, meditation and duties at the cetiya and other activities.[4]

Cleanliness, both internal and external, is a virtue highly praised in Buddhist literature. Commenting on *bojjhaṅgas* (Factors of Realization) the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* says that *vatthu-visadakiriyā* (cleanliness of things) is one of the seven conditions necessary for the fulfilment of *dhammavicaya-bojjhaṅga* (search after the dhamma).[5] According to this description, a bhikkhu should not allow his hair or nails to grow too long.[6] He should not neglect his body and allow it to be soiled with sweat and dirt, but should bathe regularly and keep it clean. He should have his robes always clean—well stitched, washed and dyed. His

1. DA. p. 57.
2. Vsm. p. 67.
3. AA. p. 820 ; MA. p. 548.
4. AA. p. 709. For educational activities see Ch. XVII on Education.
5. DA. p. 568.
6. According to the Vinaya, a bhikkhu must shave his head before his hair is two inches long or before two months elapse. (Smp. III (Colombo, 1900) p. 299).

lodgings should be kept clean and tidy.[1] He should also look after the cleanliness of his system by taking laxatives and other medicines when necessary.

From a passing reference in the *Visuddhimagga*[2] we learn that the living quarters of some monks, at least about the 5th century A.C., were sometimes very dirty. Carpets were full of dust and fouled by the droppings of lizards (*gharagolika*); the rooms smelt of bats and rats ; the floor was dirty with the excreta of pigeons; there were dry leaves and grass on the compound scattered by the wind; sometimes the compound was soiled with the excreta, urine and spittle of young sāmaṇeras who were ill and unable to go to the lavatory; on rainy days the compound was muddy and full of puddles.

The emphasis laid by ancient Buddhist writers on the virtue of sweeping and cleaning the vihāras and pariveṇas (*sammajjana-ānisaṃsa*) was perhaps due to such unsatisfactory conditions of some monasteries. The Buddha himself has described five benefits accruing from sweeping, and the *Samantapāsādikā* gives a series of stories in support. Some monks are said to have even attained the realization of Nibbāna through the joy they derived by looking at the courtyard they had just swept neatly.[3]

Nothing could have been pleasanter than the well-laid out courtyard of a cetiya, strewn with white sand and swept in a neat pattern. The Buddhist monastery is generally the cleanest place in the village, and the centre of all good and beautiful things. Therefore, monks themselves tried to make their monasteries models of refinement and sources of inspiration to the people. A beautifully kept courtyard acts like a foil to the inner peace and calm of the monastery.

1. Accordingly we find even great theras, like Malayavāsī Mahā-Saṅgharakkhita who used to give topics of meditation, engaged in cleaning their own rooms. When a monk went to Mahā-Saṅgharakkhita to get a topic of meditation, the great Elder was found busy plastering and cleaning (*paribhaṇḍa*) his residence (AA. p. 23)

2. Vsm. p. 254.

3. Smp. III, (Colombo, 1900), pp. 376-377.

Evening Duty

It was a custom among monks to sweep the courtyard of the cetiya daily and, after worship, sit together there enjoying the serenity of the moment and recite *suttas* (*sajjhāya*) with their hearts wrapt in devotion to the Buddha. Nuns and others also sat there, listening to the melody of the devotional recitation on these occasions.[1] At the end of this recitation, a religious sermon was given by the Elders to the younger monks, followed by a free discussion on various questions of the dhamma.[2] This routine generally took place in the evening.

Apart from this communal recitation (*gaṇa-sajjhāyanā*) individual monks used to recite *suttas* in their residences in the night. A melodious voice reciting a *sutta* in the calmness of the night in some sylvan solitude could captivate the hearts of its hearers. It was so enchanting that it is said that even two deities (*devatā*), who listened to the recitations of the *Mahāsamaya* and *Mahādhammasamādāna Suttas* by two young monks (*daharā*) in two different places —one at Nāgaleṇa in Koṭa-pabbata-vihāra and the other at Paṅgura-vihāra in the south—were so highly pleased that they praised the monks for their recitals.[3]

Preaching

Monks who could preach were expected to deliver sermons when their turn came. Not only on full moon and new moon days, but also on quarter moon days (*aṭṭhamiyaṃ*) sermons were delivered in monasteries. A fan (*vījanī*) was used by preachers, as is done today. When the time for preaching was announced (*dhammasavane ghuṭṭhe*) bhikkhus themselves assembled to hear the sermon. Not to attend the sermon when it was announced was considered disregard and disrespect for the dhamma.[4] Sometimes certain monks travelled long distances to hear sermons by famous preachers.[5]

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1. MA. pp. 150, 214, 354, 698.
2. AA. p. 422.
3. DA. p. 495 ff. ; MA. p. 530.
4. MA. p. 187 ; DA. pp. 535, 758 ; AA. p. 23.
5. AA. pp. 385-386.

Communal Duty

The community of bhikkhus was a large spiritual family. Its members had duties and obligations towards one another. The relation between the teacher and the pupil was that of father and son. The Buddha says that the teacher (*ācariya*) considers his pupil (*antevāsika*) as his son, and the pupil considers his teacher as his father. So is the relation between the preceptor (*upajjhāya*) and co-resident (*saddhivihārika*).[1] The pupil has to look after his teacher, and the teacher has to look after his pupil, both spiritually and materially. Normally the pupil attends on his teacher, but if the pupil falls ill, then the teacher has to attend on him, prepare his bed, and supply him with warm water and other necessities. The details of their duties to each other as given in the Vinaya show that they led a smooth communal life, loyal and devoted.[2] Sāmaṇeras used to attend to the needs of *upasampanna* monks obediently.[3]

Bhikkhus are expected to know the proper behaviour and etiquette to be followed in the presence of elderly monks. They should not move about or sit down knocking the elderly monks; should not sit on higher seats when the elders are seated on lower ones; should not wear sandals when the elders are without them; should not gesticulate with their hands while talking to elders; should not even deliver a sermon or answer a question without permission when the elders are present. The details of proper behaviour at the monastery, at the bathing place, and at public places are given at length. When a monk goes to obtain a topic of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) from a teacher, he should go there

1. *Ācariyo bhikkhave antevāsikamhi puttacittaṃ upaṭṭhapessati, antevāsiko ācariyamhi pitucittaṃ upaṭṭhapessati.* (Mhvg. p. 60). *Upajjhāyo bhikkhave saddhivihārikamhi puttacittaṃ upaṭṭhapessati, saddhivihāriko upajjhāyamhi pitucittaṃ upaṭṭhapessati.* (*Ibid.* p. 44).

2. See Mhvg. pp. 42 ff.

3. A young bhikkhu goes with a sāmaṇera to pick tooth-sticks (*dantakaṭṭha*). The sāmaṇera, who went a little further away from the road, gets into a meditation on an object of impurity (*asubha*), and realizes three stages. When he is about to direct his mind to the fourth stage, i.e., arahantship, the bhikkhu calls him. The sāmaṇera thinks : "From the day I entered the Order, I have never given occasion for a bhikkhu to call me twice. I will attend to the fourth stage some other day." And so he answered at once saying "Yes, sir": (DA. p. 129 ; VbhA. p. 244).

in the most humble manner. He should not take an attendant or a pupil with him, nor should he wear a pair of sandals or even carry an umbrella (*chatta*).[1] He should not use the water brought by the elder. Even when he has to wash his feet he should do so in a place that cannot be seen by the teacher. He should act as a most humble attendant to the elder before he receives the topic of meditation.[2]

When a monk goes to a vihāra as a guest, the resident monks should go forward and receive him kindly, take his alms-bowl, robe and fan, prepare a seat for him and attend to his needs. When the guest expresses his desire to leave the place, the resident monks should ask him to stay on. If the residents do not attend on their guests kindly, it will be bad for them, for they will be known as ill-mannered and unfaithful, unpleasant and morose, and other bhikkhus would not like to visit such a place, even if they pass that way. That would be a loss to the vihāra and the residents, for they would be deprived of the opportunity of associating with learned and holy monks.[3]

Sometimes younger monks were too jovial and light-hearted. There is an interesting story of certain young monks at a monastery called Bherapāsāṇa-vihāra in Rohaṇa, who played a practical joke on an idiot named Uttara, who lived with them in the same monastery. The young monks told the idiot that the *aggisālā* (fire-hall) was leaking, and went with him into the jungle to bring some grass to thatch the roof. When the grass was cut and tied into bundles, the monks inquired from Uttara whether he could carry 50 bundles of grass. He said no. Then they asked whether he would not carry even 80. Uttara refused that too. "But then, can't you take *one* hundred bundles?" the monks inquired. "That I can", said the idiot, and carried the heap of one hundred bundles to the monastery with great difficulty. Other monks at the monastery remarked that Uttara looked tired. "Yes, sir", he said ,"these young monks try to

1. Sandals and umbrellas seem to have been considered articles of luxury.

2. Vsm. pp. 14, 74.

3. AA. pp. 708-709.

deceive me. When I can't raise even this *one* hundred, they wanted me to raise 50 bundles of grass." "Yes, Uttara, they have deceived you" was the sympathetic remark of the monks.[1]

Spiritual Standard

The spiritual standard of some monks in ancient Ceylon does not seem to have been high. We have seen that as early as the 3rd century A.C., King Vohārika-Tissa had to pay 300,000 pieces of money to free some monks from debt.[2] From accounts found in the Pāli Commentaries, we are justified in thinking that the life of some monks in the 5th century was full of jealousy, hypocrisy and pettiness. A statement found in the *Visuddhimagga*[3] throws some light on the life of these monks. When a monk goes to get *kammaṭṭhāna* from a famous teacher, he is advised to go direct to the teacher himself, and not to go to others' quarters even to take rest before seeing the teacher. Why? Because if he happens to go to the quarters of some monks ill-disposed towards this particular teacher, they might talk ill of him, and the new-comer's mind might be prejudiced against him.

Dīgha-bhāṇaka Abhaya Thera of Rohaṇa was a great preacher and once when he gave a sermon on the *Ariyavaṃsasutta* the whole of Mahāgāma came to listen to him. Many offerings were made to the teacher. A certain mahā-thera who was jealous of Abhaya Thera's fame and popularity, remarked: "Well, the Dīgha-bhāṇaka on the pretext of preaching the *Ariyavaṃsa* creates a great disturbance throughout the whole night."

Both of them set out for their respective vihāras, and for a distance of about one *gāvuta* they had to go together along the same road. All the way the mahā-thera made insulting remarks about the Dīgha-bhāṇaka, but the latter bore it all patiently, and did not speak a word in retort. His thoughts were given to meditation. At the Junction where the two had to separate for

1. AA. p. 442. There is another story of some young sāmaṇeras fooling a man coming after his work. See MA. p. 701 ff., and VbhA. p. 207.

2. See above p. 90.

3. Vsm. p. 74.

their destinations, the Dīgha-bhāṇaka saluted the mahā-thera and said: "That's your road, Sir." But the mahā-thera went away as if he did not hear it.[1]

Certain accounts found in the Commentaries, though not referring to any individuals in particular indicate that there were some who did not like other bhikkhus coming to their vihāras as guests; they were jealous of their guests' getting in touch with their supporters (*dāyakā*) ; they did not like to divide among other monks even things belonging to the Sangha ; there were some who were even jealous of others' education.[2]

Hypocrisy was a common weakness. On festival days when people come to the vihāra, a monk may sweep the courtyard of the cetiya, clean the place, wash the flower altars, and water the Bō-tree so that the people may think that he is a devout and good monk. In the presence of laymen a bhikkhu may ask an elderly monk such questions as "Sir when I was sweeping the yard some blades of grass were broken. What happens to me ?"[3] The elder says that there is no transgression, because there is no intention. "But, Sir", remarks the hypocrite, "it appears to me a grave offence. Please inquire about it carefully."

Ignorant laymen who listen to this kind of conversation are expected to think: "Well, if this monk is so worried about such a minor matter, how conscientious he must be with regard to more important matters."

A monk may pretend to be meditating when people are seen approaching the monastery. Another who is not learned may pose as a great scholar in the presence of others. Long and interesting accounts of how hypocritical monks try to impress others with virtues which they do not possess are given in the Commentaries.[4] These accounts convince us how very anxious the heads of the Sangha were to direct the monks to lead an honest and holy life.

1. MA. pp. 65–66.
2. DA. p. 752.
3. Destruction of plant-life is a *pācittiya* transgression according to the Vinaya. See Pācit. p. 39.
4. VbhA. pp. 335 ff., 342 ff.

There were some monks who were too fond of their pupils and their belongings (*satta-saṅkhāra-keḷāyana-puggalā*). They would not allow their pupils to do anything for others, nor would they allow others to use their things.[1]

According to the Jetavanārāma Sanskrit Inscription and the Mihintalē Tablets of Mahinda IV, the spiritual standard of some monks in the 9th and 10th centuries seems to have been poor. There were some monks who had agricultural and commercial interests, who had landed property, who committed offences against religion and society, whose speech was coarse and who did not speak the truth. Such monks were not allowed to remain in those monasteries or to receive food or raiment there.[2]

Dissensions and petty quarrels in monasteries were not unheard of. Perhaps, in some places they were so common that an inscription of the 9th century, making some grants to a monastery, lays down a condition that "if there be any dissension in the monastery, the food should be thrown to crows and dogs."[3]

Buildings and Repairs

The *Cullavagga* says that the Buddha had allowed monks to effect repairs on monastic buildings in dilapidated condition as well as to build new ones.[4] When the bhikkhus assembled at Rājagaha after the Buddha's death in order to collate his teachings, they decided to spend the first month in repairing dilapidated buildings as advised by the Master.[5] Thus the monks from the earliest time regarded it their duty to look after their monasteries.

Accordingly the Jetavanārāma Sanskrit Inscription lays down that whatever place the monks may be attached to, they

1. DA. p. 575; MA. p. 241; VbhA. p. 200.
2. EZ. I, pp. 4–5, 86.
3. *Veherā viyagurak āta me bat kavuḍu ballanaṭ anā isā*—Kaludiyapokuṇa Cave Inscription, EZ. III, p. 258.
4. *Anujānāmi bhikkhave navakammaṃ dātum. Navakammkio bhikkhave bhikkhu ussukkaṃ āpajjissati kinti nu kho vihāro khippaṃ pariyosānaṃ gaccheyyāti khaṇḍaphullaṃ paṭisaṅkharissati*—Clvg. p. 256.
5. *Bhagavatā kho āvuso khaṇḍaphullapaṭisaṅkharaṇaṃ vaṇṇitaṃ. Handa mayaṃ āvuso paṭhamaṃ māsaṃ khaṇḍaphullaṃ paṭisaṅkharoma.* (*Ibid.* p. 406).

should not allow it to become dilapidated.[1] If a bhikkhu living in a monastery did not attend to the work on new buildings or on repairs to old ones, he was blamed by others for neglecting his duty.[2] Therefore, every monk living in a monastery had usually to attend to some kind of work in connection with the improvement of the place. But there were instances when a monk was sometimes exempted from this kind of work in order to allow him to devote his full time to meditation and study.[3]

Generally speaking, all monks were connected with building or repairing monasteries. There was a practice of sounding a drum (*bheri*) or gong (*gaṇḍi*) to call monks occasionally for the purpose of effecting repairs on the cetiya or thatching the Bodhi-ghara or Uposatha-house.[4] Bhikkhus have acted even as architects from very early days. The *Mahāvaṃsa* says that the plan of the nine-storeyed Lohapāsāda was drawn by eight arahants at the request of King Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī.[5] The construction of the relic chamber of Ruvanväli-sǟya was done under the supervision of an arahant named Indagutta.[6] Bhikkhus are reported to have done even manual labour by such ways as bringing bricks for the building of the Mahācetiya.[7] The *Majjhima-nikāya Commentary* records the story of a monk, most probably a *sotāpanna* according to the description, whitewashing the Mahācetiya.[8]

A slab inscription at Kataragama (1st or 2nd century A.C.) says that a thera named Nanda enlarged the cetiya there (*Nada tera ceta vadita*), and laid the steps at the four entrances (*catara-dorahi patagaḍa ataḍi*), having made the chief monks acquiesce therein.[9] The restoration of religious buildings was regarded

1. *Yatra ye niyaktās tatrāvināṣas taircva deyah.* (EZ. I, p. 4).

2. *Navavihāre bahuṃ navakammaṃ hoti ; akarontaṃ ujjhāyanti.* (Vsm. p. 88). *Jiṇṇavihāre pana bahuṃ paṭijaggitabbaṃ hoti. Antamaso attano senāsanamattampi apaṭijaggantaṃ ujjhāyanti.* (*Ibid*. p. 89).

3. *Ibid.* p. 88.

4. AA. p. 707.

5. Mhv. xxvii 9–20.

6. *Ibid.* xxx 98.

7. *Ibid.* xxx 19–41.

8. MA. p. 549.

9. EZ. III, p. 215. Nanda Thera might have done this, just as Saraṇankara Sangharāja's pupils rebulit dilapidated vihāras in the 18th century, or as Nāranviṭa Sumanasāra Thera undertook the restoration of Ruvanväli-sǟya at the end of the last (19th) century.

as being so meritorious that an inscription on the stone canoe at the Mahāpāli Refectory says that bhikkhus sacrificed their ration of food at the Mahāpāli for the restoration of the Jetavana Dāgäba.[1] Restoration work was so highly appreciated that the *Mahāvaṃsa* has carefully recorded even a small thing like putting three stone steps by a sāmaṇera to climb the Akāsa-cetiya and praises the work as meritorious.[2]

To be busy with the construction of monastic buildings was regarded as a method of subduing and controlling the senses. The Commentaries mention that when a bhikkhu is engaged in building an uposatha-house or a refectory, he has to be busy thinking about things necessary for the job, and so his *kilesas* (evil thoughts) will have no opportunity to stir.[3] The *Aṅguttara Commentary* goes further and says that sometimes a bhikkhu may even become an arahant by not allowing his *kilesas* thus suppressed for the time being to rise again, and a story as related in illustration:

A monk named Tissa of Cittala-pabbata, being disappointed with his monastic life, decided to leave the Order and informed his teacher accordingly. The mahā-thera was a man of resource. "Now I am old, Tissa", said the teacher to the young monk, "please build me a living place." The pupil at once agreed to do it. Then the mahā-thera said further: "While you are engaged in that work, please do not forget your topic of meditation; practise some *kasiṇa* meditation occasionally." Tissa agreed. He cleaned a cave, built the walls, fixed the doors and windows, prepared everything necessary and reported to the teacher. "Tissa, you have built it with great difficulty", said the thera, "why don't you yourself live there for one night?" The pupil obeyed. He washed his feet, entered the cave, sat

1. *Me Ma(hapeḷä) bat (ga)nnā täk denamo a(pa) lada bat (ko)ṭas bat Denāvehe(rä) dāgābä karana (kam) nāvāmaṭa dunmo.* EZ. III, p. 132. How did the bhikkhus live after giving their share to this work ? Most probably they might have lived by *piṇḍapāta.*

2. Mhv. xxii 25–28.

3. *Ekacco pana navakammiko hoti, uposathāgāra-bhojanasālādīni karoti, tassa tesaṃ upakaraṇāni cintentassa kilesā okāsaṃ na labhanti.* VbhA p. 209 ; AA. pp. 18-19.

down cross-legged and began to meditate. He thought of his own life and work, directed his mind to the meditation of *vipassanā* (insight) and he became an arahant. Thus, to be busy with the construction of a building was regarded as helpful in getting rid of *kilesas* permanently.[1]

This kind of work as a means of getting rid of *kilesas* is prescribed only for those who are spiritually backward. For a person genuinely interested in his spiritual attainments, this is regarded as a great hindrance (*palibodha*) to be avoided.[2]

Affairs of the Heart

The life of bhikkhus, however strictly controlled, was not free from occassional interludes, such as affairs of the heart. Mahā theras who looked after the young monks tried their best to protect their pupils from falling victims to temptations and dangers.[3]

The principal of Kāḷadīghavāpidvāra-vihāra agreed to teach a young student monk only on condition that the latter would not go about in the village. The teacher feared that the pupil would succumb to some temptation in the village. Perhaps this particular village had a bad reputation.

Naturally the young monk developed a curiosity to find out for himself why his teacher prohibited him from going into the village. Therefore, after his studies, on his way back home, he passed through this village. A young girl, wearing a yellow cloth, came out from a house and put some gruel into his alms-bowl. She fell in love with him at first sight, and went in and lay on her bed.

When her parents inquired of her why she did so, she told them that her life would not last if she could not win the love of the young monk.

1. AA. pp. 26–27.
2. Vsm. p. 70.
3. Even during the great famine. *Bäminiṭiyā sāya*, a mahā-thera was about to punish a sāmaṇera for creating a suspicion in his mind. The sāmaṇera, who later became a great monk known as Vattabbaka-Nigrodha versed in the Tripiṭaka, had gone to the jungle before dawn to fulfil his vow of *āraññikaṅga*. (For *āraññikaṅga* see Vsm. p. 54.) But his teacher did not know what happend to the sāmaṇera. (VbhA. p. 318.)

Her parents ran after the young monk, worshipped him and invited him to take his meal at their house. But the monk refused to go back. Then they divulged the secret to him: "Sir", they said, "we have enough wealth, and we have only one daughter. You become our eldest son, and you can live happily."

But the young monk thought at once of his teacher's advice, saw that this would be a great trouble, and went off.

The girl refused to take food and died of grief.

After her funeral, her parents offered her yellow cloth to the Sangha of the neighbouring vihāra. One of the monks who got a piece of this cloth as his share went on a pilgrimage to Kälaṇiya, and casually related the whole story to the young monk who happened to be there. Full of remorse that he had missed his chance of getting a sincere and devoted wife, the young monk died of grief.[1]

Sometimes monks turned their attention not only to village belles but also to beauties of the Royal Court. A young monk of Lohapāsāda and a lady of King Saddhā-Tissa's retinue are reported to have died of love for each other.[2] Another monk called Citta of Cetiyagiri who had entered the Order when he was advanced in age (*buḍḍha-pabbajita*) was mad with love for the beautiful young Tamil queen (Damiḷa-devī) of king Mahādāṭhika Mahānāga (67-79 A.C.), and is said to have become a butt for the clumsy ridicule of the younger monks at Mihintalē.[3]

There are also instances of monks falling in love with nuns Once young monks were reciting *suttas* (*sajjhāyaṃ*) at the Mahā-cetiya (Ruvanväli-säya), probably in the evening. Some young nuns were seated immediately behind them listening to the recital.[3] One of the young monks, stretching his hand backward,

1. MA. pp. 353–354 ; AA. p. 13. There is another story of a young sāmaṇera falling in love with a weaving girl and marrying her. See MA. pp. 698 ff.

2. AA. p. 13.

3. Adikaram thinks this was a class. (EHBC. p. 127). But this was only a recitation (*sajjhāya*) of *suttas* in the evening by bhikkhus after their worship at the cetiya. This practice is followed by Buddhist monks up to this day. Sometimes men and women, too, sit down and listen to this.

touched the body of a young nun. She took his hand and placed it on her breast. They developed a love for each other and later left the Order.[1]

There is a charming story in the *Majjhima Commentary*.[2] At the consecration ceremony of the Maricavaṭṭi-vihāra (1st century B.C.) great multitudes of both monks and nuns were assembled at Anurādhapura. A little sāmaṇera was carrying a bowl of hot gruel. It was so hot that he had to put the bowl now in the folds of his robe and now on the ground. A little nun saw his plight and gave him a plate (*thālaka*), saying: "Take it on this."

Years passed, and there was a famine in Ceylon.[3] Many monks and nuns, including the two referred to above, were obliged to go to a "country beyond the seas" (*parasamuddaṃ*), most probably to India, as was usual on such occasions. The nun had gone there with an earlier group of nuns. When she heard that a new Sinhalese monk had arrived, she went to see him and sat there chatting. "Sir", she inquired, "how old were you at the time of the consecration ceremony of Maricavaṭṭi?" "I was only a seven-year-old sāmaṇera. How old were you?" "I too was only a seven-year-old sāmaṇerī", said the nun, and re-called the old incident: "There I gave a plate to a little sāmaṇera, who was carrying some hot gruel, to put his bowl on". "That's me!" exclaimed the thera, and taking out the plate showed it to the nun. The old memories were refreshed, and they developed a love for each other and left the Order. According to the story they were sixty years at this time (*saṭṭhivassika-kāle*).[4]

But for such exceptional cases as these, seldom do we come across instances of moral lapse among bhikkhus while they were in robes. Mention is made in the *Dharmapradīpikā*[5] of a solitary example of "a man and a woman wearing robes"[6] having

1. MA. pp. 354–355, 214 ; DA. p. 137 ; VbhA. p. 252 ; AA. p. 16.
2. MA. p. 354.
3. Most probably the famous Bāmiṇiṭiyā-sāya.
4. See above p. 59, n. 3.
5. *Dharmapradīpikā*, p. 322.
6. *Sivuru perevi strī-puruṣa kenekun.* Note that Guruḷugōmi does not like to call them monk and nun, but refers to them as "a man and a woman wearing robes."

physical relations in a park at Anuradhapura in the 2nd century B.C. If a bhikkhu happened to fall in love with a woman and was not able to overcome the temptation, the normal course was for him to leave the Order honourably and marry her, which was perfectly justifiable and allowed.

Pilgrimages

Pilgrimages to celebrated places of worship were a common feature of the life of bhikkhus. This was encouraged by the Buddha himself. The Buddha, during his life-time, used to spend three or four months during the rainy season in one place, and to spend the rest of the year going from village to village, from province to province, from country to country, teaching the people how to lead a good life. This was known as *cārikā*, and hundreds of bhikkhus joined the Buddha in this "pilgrimage".

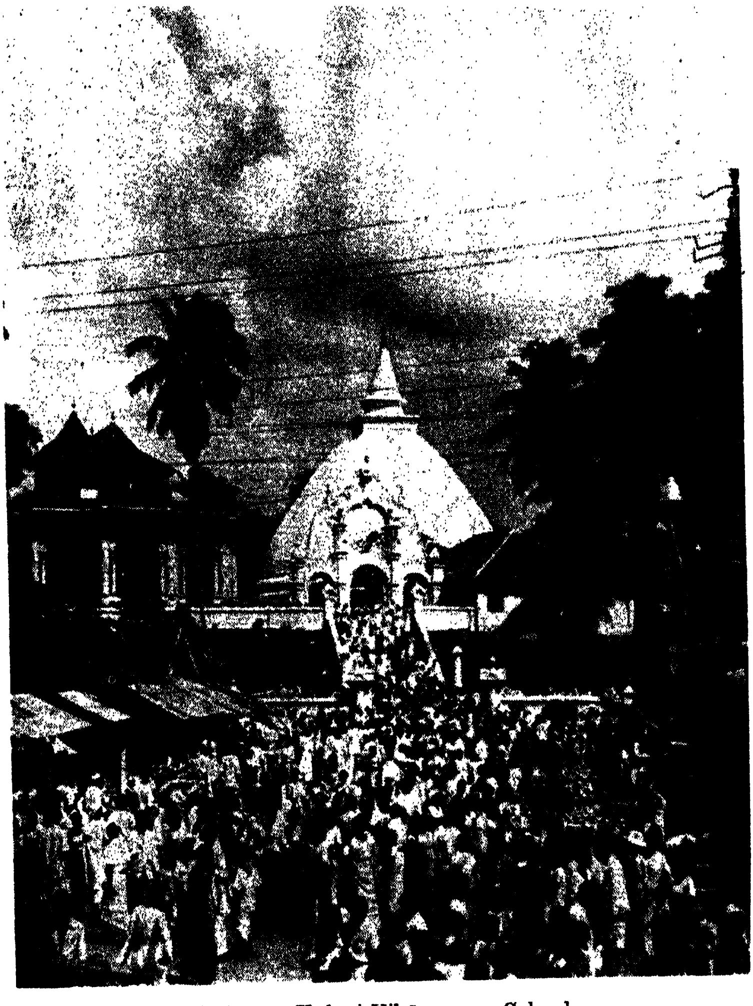
In the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* the Buddha is reported to have told Ānanda that devout disciples should visit the sites of the Buddha's birth, his enlightenment, his first sermon and his final passing away, and that if any died during a pilgrimage to holy places (*cetiya-cārikā*), they would be born in a heavenly world.[1]

Buddhaghosa, commenting on this passage, says that no mention is necessary of those who go round sweeping the court-yards of cetiyas, washing the flower altars and watering the Bodhi trees, because even those who die with a clean conscience on the way to a place of worship will immediately be reborn in a heavenly world.[2]

Following these ideas and traditions, Buddhist monks in Ceylon used to go on pilgrimage to places of worship not only in the Island, but also in India. On these trips monks went usually in groups, which was pleasanter and safer. When great teachers like Dhammadinna of Tissamahā-vihāra near Talaṅgara-pabbata and Tipiṭaka Cūlābhaya went on pilgrimage, they had large numbers of bhikkus, as many as 500, to go with them.[3] Small

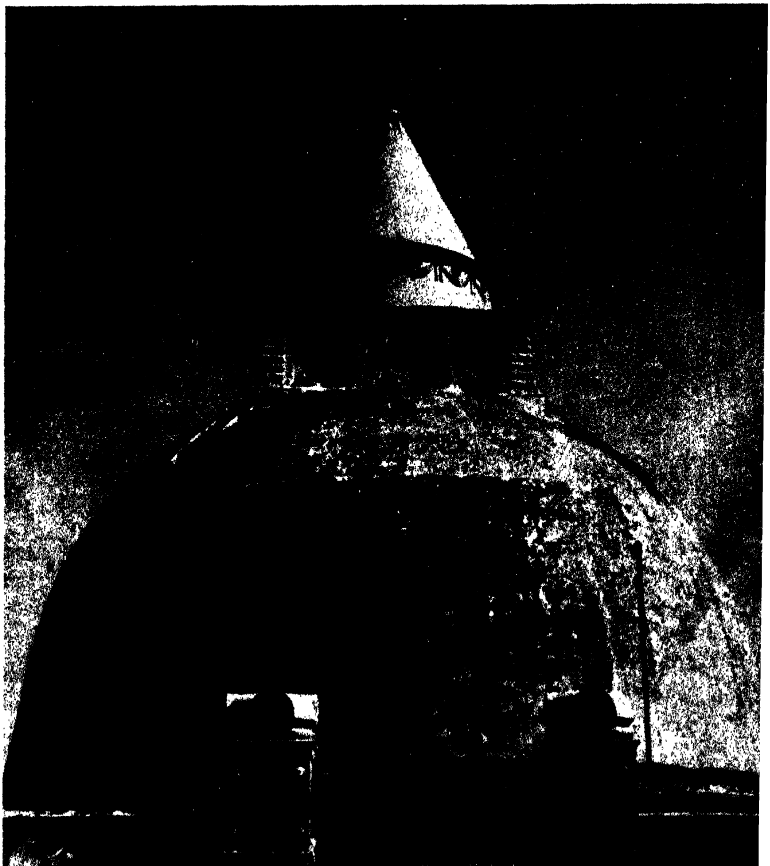
1. D. II, p. 86.
2. DA. p. 407.
3. Rsv. II, p. 128; VbhA. p. 323. Numbers should not be taken literally.

XXII



Pilgrims at Käläṇi Vihāra, near Colombo. (p. 190)

XXIII



Ceylon Archaeological Survey

TISSAMAHĀRĀMA THŪPA, South Ceylon, (2nd century B.C.) (p. 191)

groups of 7, 12, 30, 50 or 60 bhikkhus were very common.[1] Usually these groups were composed of teachers and students or co-celibates from neighbouring vihāras. But monks of austere practices, like Paṃsukūlikas and Piṇḍapātikas, usually went alone.[2]

A pilgrimage to the Bodhi at Buddhagayā in India which was perilous and difficult was normally undertaken by groups of pilgrims, sometimes including laymen and lay women. The whole journey from Anurādhapura to Buddhagayā took about ten or eleven months.[3]

There were several well-known places of pilgrimage in Ceylon. The Mahābodhi and the Mahācetiya (Ruvanvälisāya) at Anurādhapura were very popular.[4] Nāgadīpa (in modern Jaffna Peninsula) was equally popular.[5] Tissamahā-vihāra in the south[6] and Kalyāṇi-cetiya in the west[7] were two other well-known places. Sometimes Samantakūṭa (Śri-Pāda) is also mentioned.[8] On their way to these famous places, pilgrims did not fail to worship at other religious places they happened to pass.

The benefits of a pilgrimage at that time were manifold. It was primarily a *cetiya-cārikā* in the ancient tradition, according to the advice of the Buddha himself. Travelling through the country, seeing new things and meeting new people, was a healthy change from the monotonous life of the monastery. Travelling with a learned teacher was always profitable, for the bhikkhus could discuss important points with him all along the way. It was like a peripatetic school. A pilgrimage also helped monks to get rid of their attachment to their own monasteries.

1. Rsv. II, pp. 150, II, 17 ; VbhA. p. 207 ; AA. p. 653 ; MA. p. 545; DA. p. 368.
2. AA. pp. 489, 277.
3. Rsv. II, pp. 124–125. From Anurādhapura to Koṭṭapaṭṭana (*Saddharmālaṅkāra* calls it Māvaṭu-paṭungama) 4 months ; from Koṭṭapaṭṭana to the other shore (*paratīra*) by sea 3 months ; from there to the Bodhi at Buddhagayā 4 months.
4. VbhA. p. 204 ; Vsm. p. 106.
5. DA. p. 368 ; MA. p. 545 ; AA. p. 653.
6. AA. p. 227.
7. Rsv. II, p. 17 ; VbhA. p. 207.
8. Rsv. II, p. 17.

More than all this, a great service to the people was rendered by bhikkhus on pilgrimage. Just like the Buddha and his disciples on *cārikā*, these pilgrim monks advised the people in the villages through which they passed, to lead good lives. Monks were not in a hurry. They could tarry for a while when it was necessary. Therefore they stopped and delivered sermons at places where it was necessary to do so.

Besides three robes, alms-bowl and water-strainer (to strain water for drinking), a monk on a journey generally carried with him an oil-can (for such personal use as applying oil on the feet), a pair of sandals and a case to put them in when not in use, a fan and sometimes an umbrella and walking-stick.[1] He had also a knapsack (*thavikā*) containing the apparatus for generating fire (*araṇisahitādīni*), *sipāṭikā* (a case ?), *ārakaṇṭaka*, (pins ?), *pipphalaka* (pair of scissors ?), *nakhacchedana* (nail-clipper) and *sūci* (needle). There was also in it a note-book (*muṭṭhi-potthaka*) wherein the virtues of the Buddha and the Dhamma were written for occasional reference.[2]

Social Service

We get very little information regarding the interest of bhikkhus in social work, apart from their educational and cultural activities.[3] It appears that opinion was divided as to whether bhikkhus should be interested in social service and humanitarian activities. A little story in the *Majjhima Commentary* will throw some light on this matter.[4]

A certain *upāsikā* (female devotee) in a village was attending on Cullapiṇḍapātiya Tissa Thera for many years. One day there was a fire in the village, and many houses, including the *upāsikā's* were burnt down. Some bhikkhus who visited the village on this occasion inquired sympathetically from the *upāsikā* whether she could save anything. But Culla-, piṇḍapātiya Tissa Thera did not visit her in her misfortune.

1. Vsm. pp. 68, 74 ; AA. pp. 708-709.
2. MA. p. 312.
3. For their educational and cultural activities see Chapter on Education.
4. MA. p. 355.

The villagers remarked that he would come there only at the meal time. And the thera, too, went there next day for alms exactly at the meal time as usual. The *upāsikā* prepared, some food under the shadow of a wall, and offered it to the monk.

When the thera had gone away after his meal, the villagers scoffed at the attitude of the monk saying that her friend the thera came exactly at the meal time. The innocent woman simply rejoined: "Your intimate theras (*kulūpakā*) are good for you and my thera is good for me."

This story throws light on several points. There were two classes of monks: One class of monks devoted themselves only to meditation, with the sole purpose of saving themselves, without taking any interest in the welfare of the people.[1] The other class of monks seems to have taken an interest in the welfare of the people—both spiritual and material—in addition to their own salvation. This attitude seems to be healthier than the first one, and is in keeping with the spirit of the Master. The Buddha himself is reported to have visited and consoled a brahmin friend in distress when all his corn was washed away by floods on one occasion.[2]

Public opinion also seems to have been divided on this question. Some people, like the old *upāsikā*, agreed with the attitude of Cullapiṇḍapātiya Tissa in the story above. The Commentary itself seems to have appreciated that attitude, for it praises Cullapiṇḍapātiya Tissa as most independent and accepting gifts without any obligation (*mutta-muttaka*). The majority, it seems, however, did not agree with Cullapiṇḍapātiya Tissa, but appreciated the attitude of monks who took an interest in the welfare of the people.

The traditional and popular attitude of the Sangha to the laity is clearly and briefly set in the advice given to them in the following verse:

1. See Chapter on The Monastic life III : Its Ascetic Ideal.
2. SnA. p. 413 ff.

gihīnam upakarontānaṃ niccaṃ āmisadānato
karotha dhammadānena tesaṃ paccupakārakaṃ[1]

"Render help in return by spiritual gifts to lay people who always support you with material gifts."

The same idea is expressed more elaborately in the *Sigāla-sutta* of the *Dīgha-nikāya.*[2]

In the verse quoted above, in the term *dhamma-dāna* can rightly be included all spiritual, educational and cultural services. Therefore the bhikkhus felt it was their bounden duty to serve with spiritual, cultural and educational gifts the lay people who looked after their material comforts.

We learn from certain stories[3] that the general opinion of monks was that they could serve the people best by leading a holy life themselves. Their way of life was an inspiration and example for the people to follow a righteous life. Monks earnestly felt that they should be worthy of gifts which the laity provided for them even at the expense of their own comforts. But bhikkhus are advised to assist and look after their parents when they are in need of material help.[4]

Sects or Nikāyas

We have seen earlier how dissensions in the Sangha took place, and how *nikāyas* or sects began to develop in Ceylon. Three nikāyas (*nikāyattaya*) are referred to often in the Chronicles.[5] King Mahānāga (556-568 A.C.) is reported to have repaired the three great cetiyas (*mahācetiyattaya*) and made gifts of cloth to the three nikāyas.[6] The three great cetiyas referred to here are undoubtedly the Suvaṇṇamālī (Ruvanväli-sǟya), the Abhayagiri and the Jetavana dāgābas at Anurādhapura, and these three respectively represented the three chief monastic establishments.

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1. *Saddharmālaṅkāraya*, p. 523.
2. D. III, p. 117.
3. DA. p. 750 ; MA. p. 237 ; AA. pp. 276, 278 ; VbhA. p. 196 ; Rsv. II, p. 143.
4. Smp. (SHB) p. 335.
5. Mhv. xli 97 ; xliv 131 ; xlv 16 ; xlvi 16 ; xlviii 73 ; li 14, 64, 113 ; lii 10, 12, 35, 80.
6. *Ibid.* xli 95, 97.

Generally a nikāya was known by the name of a great vihāra. There is no reason, therefore, to doubt that the three nikāyas referred to in the Chronicles were the Mahāvihāra, the Abhayagiri and the Jetavana.

There were two other sects known as Dhammaruci and Sāgaliya; but they were included in the Abhayagiri and the Jetavana sects respectively, as we have seen earlier, though sometimes they are referred to by their former names.[1]

There are two other nikāyas referred to side by side with the three nikāyas. The *Mahāvaṃsa* says that Aggabodhi IV (658-674 A.C.) granted many maintenance villages to the vihāras of the two nikāyas and in short 1,000 villages to the three nikāyas.[2] It is not clear whether these two nikāyas were included in the three great nikāyas or whether they were Dhammaruci and Sāgaliya or some other two nikāyas. Geiger thinks that, perhaps, the Thūpārāma and the Mirisavāṭi-vihāra are meant here.[3] But they are not known to be referred to as two separate nikāyas.[4]

Before we hear of the different sects as such, we come across, in records of about the latter part of the first century B.C., two groups known as Dhammakathika and Paṃsukūlika.[5] They were not two different nikāyas, but only two groups of the same community leading two ways of life. Dhammakathika literally means a "preacher". Evidently the learned monks who were teachers also were included in this group. Paṃsukūlikas were those who used only rag-robes. There were three grades of them: the first grade used only robes made out of rags picked up in

1. *Ibid.* v 13 ; xxxix 41 ; xlii 43 ; xlvii 1-2 ; lii 17.

2. *Ibid.* xlvi 15-16 : *tathā dvinnaṃ nikāyānaṃ vihāre mandapaccaye*
disvā vā'pi ca sutvā vā bhogagāme bahū adā ;
bahunā kintu vuttena nikāyesu' pi tīsu' pi
adā gāmasahassaṃ so bahuppādaṃ nirākulaṃ.

3. Clv. tr. I, p. 99, n. 2.

4. If the two verses, Mhv. xlvi 15-16 quoted above, are read together, and the line *bahunā kintu vuttena* "what is the use of much talk?" is taken into consideration, it seems, that the two nikāyas mentioned in v. 15 are included in the three nikāyas mentioned in v. 16.

Smp. (SHB) p. 220 mentions some "five great monasteries" (*pañcamahāvihāra*). Rsv. II, p. 51 also refers to *pañcamahāvāsa*, "five great residences". What these are we cannot say defintely. But certainly they are not sects or nikāyas.

5. AA. pp. 52-53.

cemeteries; the second grade picked up all kinds of rags left in various places by the laity for the use of monks; the third grade accepted even robes left by the laity at the feet of those monks. But none of them could, at their will and pleasure, accept robes offered by the laity.[1] The Paṃsukūlikas to whom robes were offered by kings in the 8th and 10th centuries, according to some *Mahāvaṃsa* accounts, seem to have belonged to the third grade.[2]

But when different sects came into being, they had their own Paṃsukūlikas. Thus there were Paṃsukūlikas belonging to the Mahāvihāra as well as to the Abhayagiri.[3] But it is reported that the Paṃsukūlikas belonging to the Abhayagiri separated and formed themselves into a special group (*gaṇā'hesuṃ*) in the 20th year of Sena II (851-885 A.C.).[4] We cannot say definitely whether this group continued as a separate sect. Paṃsukūlikas lived in urban monasteries like the Thūpārāma as well as in forest-dwellings like the Tapovana, and mountain caves like Riṭigala.[5]

There was another group of monks known as *Āraṇyavāsī* or *Vanavāsī* dwelling in jungle areas, as opposed to *Grāmavāsī* residing in towns and villages. From about the 6th century A.C., they are referred to as a distinctive group, though not as a separate nikāya.[6] As in the case of Paṃsukūlikas, most probably all the nikāyas had their Āraṇyakas. There is particular mention of Āraṇyaka bhikkhus belonging to the Mahāvihāra.[7] From about the 6th century, the forest-dwelling monks were sometimes referred to as *tapassi* "hermit " or "ascetic", which is not a term usually applied to bhikkhus.[8] In the 10th century reference

1. See Vsm. pp. 47–48.
2. Mhv. xlviii 16 ; lii 27 ; liii 48 ; liv 25.

Geiger reads the second line of Ch. lii, v. 27 as *paṃsukūlikamātūnaṃ*. The Colombo ed. prefers *paṃsukūlikabhikkhūnaṃ*. There is no reason why it should be read—*mātūnaṃ* and not *bhikkhūnaṃ*.

3. AA. p. 489 ; Mhv. xlvii 66 ; li 52.
4. Mhv. li 52.
5. AA. p. 489 ; Mhv. xlvii 66 ; xlviii 4 ; xlix 81 ; l 63 ; liii 25.
6. Mhv. xli 99 ; lii 22 ; liii 14 ff. ; liv 20.
7. *Mahāvihāre bhikkhūnaṃ vane nivasataṃ adā*—Mhv. lii 22.
8. *Ibid.* xli 99 ; liv 20.

is made to a monastery called Tapovana, "Ascetic-Grove," near Anurādhapura which was the residence for forest-dwelling monks. There were also Paṃsukūlikas living in this monastery.[1]

Paṃsukūlika and Āraṇyaka are only two of the 13 *dhutaṅgas*.[2] There were monks who observed other *dhutaṅgas* like *piṇḍapātika*. But they were not regarded as separate groups. It is curious that only the Paṃsukūlikas and Āraṇyakas were regarded as separate groups, and for this we are at a loss to find a satisfactory explanation.

NUNS

Little is known of the activities of nuns. The Kukurumahandamana Pillar Inscription of the 10th century says that there was a hospital (*ved-hal*) in front of the nunnery known as Mahindārāma on the High Street (*mahaveya*) of the Inner City (of Anurādhapura).[3] One is tempted to ask whether the bhikkhunīs could have served as nurses in these hospitals. Various references show that richly endowed nunneries were established by kings

1. *Ibid.* liii 14 ff. This may be the group of so-called Western Monasteries lying in the forest area to the west of Anurādhapura. For details of these ruins see *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of Ceylon*, Vol. I p. 18 ff.

The Araṇyavāsins used to live in quiet, forest areas, devoted chiefly to meditation, while the Grāmavāsins lived in towns and villages, engaged in activities directed towards cultural and educational development. In later times, the Āraṇyakas, too, like the Grāmavāsins, took greater interest in intellectual pursuits, and were even engaged in writing non-religious works. The *Bālāvabodhana*, a Sanskrit Grammar, written by Āraṇyavāsī Diṁbulāgala Mahā-Kāsyapa is a good example. By that time the difference between the Araṇyavāsins and Grāmavāsins seems to have been only in the name, and not in practice. The Araṇyavāsins also appear to have been attracted by the way of life of the Grāmavāsins. These two classes were in later times known as *Ubhaya-vāsa*, "two residences", i.e., *grāma* (village) and *araṇya* (forest). (See Nks. pp. 20, 22, 24). Modern Malvatta and Asgiriya, the two chief vihāras in Kandy seem to be the descendants of the old *Ubhaya-vāsa*, the former being the *grāmavāsa* and the latter the *araṇyavāsa*.

Another group of monks known as *Lābhavāsi* is referred to in the 10th century and later. (Mhv. liv 27, lx 68, 72). But little is known about them.

2. The thirteen *dhutaṅgas* are : *pamsukūlika*, *tecīvarika*, *piṇḍapātika*, *sapadānacārika*, *ekāsanika*, *pattapiṇḍika*, *khalupacchābhattika*, *āraññika*, *Rukkhamūlika*, *abbhokāsika*, *sosānika*, *yathāsanthatika*, *nesajjika*. For details see Vsm. p. 45 ff.

3. EZ. II, p. 22.

and queens for the maintenance of bhikkhunīs.[1] The *Dīpavaṃsa* gives a list of prominent nuns,[2] but about their activities nothing is known, except that they taught the Vinaya. We have no reason to doubt that they, too, led a life similar to that of monks.

1. Mhv. xxxix 43 ; xlvi 27 ; xlix 25 ; EZ. I, p. 44.
2. Dpv. xviii 20–23, 27–35.

12.

THE MONASTIC LIFE III: ITS ASCETIC IDEAL

We have seen in the two previous chapters how the monks were constrained to change their ways of life gradually because of various circumstances beyond their control. This change was noticed by the Sangha of old, but was not recognized as an inevitable development, natural and normal. They viewed it with great anxiety and concern, as a mark of deterioration. Evidently they felt that in spite of their earnest and repeated attempts at "purifying the sāsana", they were helpless against this overwhelming tide of change and development. Disappointed with the contemporary state of affairs, therefore, they looked back for their guidance and consolation upon the past which they regarded as perfect and ideal.

It is both a curious fact and a universal tendency that humanity always believes that the past was the best state of all, the present is bad and the future will be worse. All good and holy men, regarded as saints and arahants, lived in the past; contemporary men and affairs are corrupt and degenerate; after us, the future will be increasingly worse. This ideal past, which in reality never existed, drifts further and further away like a mirage as one draws near it. If one dives deep into that "ideal past" and investigates the experiences of those who lived then, it will be found that they were equally dissatisfied with the contemporary state of affairs, and that they themselves had their eyes fixed on an ever-retreating "ideal past".

So we find the Pāli Commentaries praising the theras who lived in the past, and indirectly remarking on the unsatisfactory nature of the contemporary society of monks, at least in the 5th century A.C.[1]

For example, in the course of relating the story of Tipiṭaka Cullasumma Thera, who attended a sermon of his pupil Tipiṭaka Cullanāga Thera, the Commentaries say that the ancient theras were fond of listening to the dhamma, and vied with one another in assembling immediately they heard the announcement.[2] This may be taken as an insinuation that the monks at the time this statement was made did not care very much for hearing the dhamma.

There was a difference of opinion between the same teacher and pupil with regard to a subtle doctrinal point, and ultimately the teacher is reported to have accepted openly the opinion of his pupil. Here again the Commentaries praise Cullasumma Thera's magnanimity, saying: "And the ancient theras are not jealous; they do not go about carrying only what they prefer, like a bundle of sugar-cane. They accept only the reasonable and reject the unreasonable".[3] This suggests that, generally, the contemporary monks were not amenable to reason, but obstinately held fast to their own views, whether right or wrong.[4]

Speaking about attending on the Elders, the Commentaries state: "Now, the ancient bhikkhus do not show respect looking at the face, thinking 'this is our preceptor or this is our teacher'.

1. We should remember here that the statements found in the present Commentaries were translated into Pāli from the original Sinhalese Commentaries written earlier, most probably several centuries earlier. Therefore these statements refer to a society that existed even earlier than the 5th century A.C.

2. *Porāṇakattherā kira piyadhammasavanā honti. Saddaṃ sutvā'va ahaṃ paṭhamaṃ ahaṃ paṭhamanti ekappahāreneva osaranti.* DA. p. 535 ; MA. p. 187.

3. *Porāṇakattherā hi anusuyyakā honti. Na attano rucim eva ucchubhāraṃ viya ukkhipitvā vicaranti ; kāraṇam eva gaṇhanti, akāraṇaṃ vissajjenti.* DA. p. 535 ; MA. p. 187.

4. But ancient monks were no better either : we know how the quarrelsome bhikkhus of Kosambi obstinately and unreasonably held fast to their own factious views on a minor matter in spite of the Buddha's admonition, compelling the Master to leave the monastery and retire to the forest.

They attend on them (their guests) as they come".[1] When we read this passage, we have the feeling that the monks at the time this was written waited only upon their teachers and preceptors and the like, and not on other theras, unknown to them.[2]

Numerous arahants are said to have lived during the period of Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī and his brother Saddhā-Tissa, in the first century B.C.[3] But, strangely enough, we find Saddhā-Tissa requesting the monks to name one holy man (*ayya*) who deserved his veneration.[4] This, undoubtedly, is a reflection on the Sangha of the first century B.C. Saddhā-Tissa does not seem to have been pleased with the great majority of monks of his day, and seems to have been at a loss to find one whom he could worship with undiminished devotion.[5]

This kind of general dissatisfaction with contemporary society and admiration for the past can be traced as far back as the time of the Buddha himself.

One day, Mahā-Kassapa visited the Buddha at Veluvana at Rājagaha. The great elder, who had an unequalled reputation for holiness, spent most of his time in solitude, and visited the Master only occasionally. The Buddha himself held him in high esteem, and regarded the elder as equal to himself in exhorting monks. Therefore the Buddha requested Mahā-Kassapa to advise monks and give them a religious talk on this occasion.

But Mahā-Kassapa showed no eagerness to do this: "Sir", said he, "now (*etarahi*) the monks are not compliant (*dubbacā*); they are inclined to be recalcitrant (*dovacassakaraṇehi dhammehi samannāgatā*); they are intolerant (*akkhamā*) and not keen to take advice (*appadakkhiṇaggāhino anusāsaniṃ*). Here I saw, Sir, Ānanda's co-resident (*saddhivihārī*), a bhikkhu called Bhaṇḍu

1. *Porāṇakabhikkhū kira na amhākaṃ upajjhāyo amhākaṃ ācariyotī mukhaṃ oloketvā vattaṃ karonti ; sampattaparicchedene'va karonti.* DA. p. 130 ; MA. p. 207 ; VbhA. p. 245.

2. Remember the reference earlier to monks who were fond of their pupils and would not allow them to attend on others. See above p. 184.

3. See next chapter on Arahants in Ceylon.

4. *Bhante, mayhaṃ vanditabbayuttakaṃ ekaṃ ayyaṃ ācikkhatha.*—AA. p. 384.

5. Was Saddhā-Tissa, perhaps, prejudiced because of the young monk of Lohapāsāda who fell in love with a lady of his court ? See above p. 188.

and another bhikkhu called Ābhiñjika who is Anuruddha's co-resident, talking each other down on their learning (*aññamaññaṃ sutena accāvadante*) saying : 'Come on, bhikkhu, who will recite more? Who will recite better? Who will recite longer ?' "[1]

Similarly, on two other occasions at Sāvatthi, when the Buddha suggested that Mahā-Kassapa should advise the monks, the great elder was reluctant, on the ground that the monks were bad, and implied further that they were devoid of qualities necessary for the higher life.[2]

"It is so Kassapa, (*tathā hi pana Kassapa*)", agreed the Buddha, and explained the existing situation : Formerly (*pubbe*) the monks dwelt in forests, lived on alms-begging, used rag-robes, had only three robes, desired nothing, were contented, lived in solitude without social contact, were given to endeavour, and they also praised the value of these virtues. Those who had these good qualities were popular and respected in those days. That was an encouragement for younger bhikkhus to follow these good virtues.

But now (*etarahi*) the monks do not practise these virtues. Now, if a bhikkhu is famous and renowned, if he receives the four requisites abundantly, then the elders would receive him and respect him. The younger monks also follow their example. One could safely say the celibates were overpowered (*upaddutā*) by dangers to the spiritual life (*brahmacārupaddavena*)[3]

On another occasion, Mahā-Kassapa asked the Buddha why formerly there were less precepts and more arahants, and why now there were more precepts and less arahants.

1. S. p. 275.
2. *Ibid.* pp. 276–278.
We can appreciate Mahā-Kassapa's disappointment better if we remember that once one of his own pupils had burnt down the thera's hut near Rājagaha. At that time Mahā-Kassapa had two pupils with him, one was good-natured and the other ill-behaved. On several occasions Mahā-Kassapa advised the ill-behaved pupil to mend his ways, and on account of this the young monk harboured a grudge against the elder. One day, when the elder was out, the wicked fellow destroyed the elder's utensils and set fire to his hut and ran away. No wonder Mahā-Kassapa was not willing to advise monks. See DhpA. p. 223 ff. Also Jataka No. 321, *Kuṭidūsaka Jātaka.*
3. S. pp. 278–279.

"It is so, Kassapa", said the Buddha, "when people become degenerate and the good teaching disappears, there are more precepts and less bhikkhus attain arahantship."[1]

After the Buddha's death, on one occasion Mahā-Kassapa reprimanded Ānanda for moving about with young monks who were "loose and not self-restrained". Mahā-kassapa called Ānanda a youngster (*kumāraka*) who did not know his position (*mattaṃ*).

Ānanda remonstrated that he should be called a "youngster" by the Venerable Mahā-Kassapa when he had grey hairs on his head. The great elder rejoined that it was because of his association with "unrestricted and irresponsible youngsters."[2]

A thera named Pārāpariya, some time after the Buddha's death, broods at length over the degeneration and deterioration of monks. He says that when the Master was living they led noble lives, but now their life was lamentably degenerate and full of evil. "Those great and noble arahants are now dead and gone. Such men are now rare" he laments.[3]

Another thera, named Phussa, makes a long prediction indicating that bhikkhus in future will be hopelessly corrupt and depraved, and will be guilty of the practices prohibited by the Master and lead ordinary worldly lives.[4]

Such references clearly prove that even at the time of the Buddha and also immediately after his death, there was a strong body of opinion that good men belonged to the past, contemporaries were unsatisfactory, and future generations would be corrupt beyond hope. The Buddha himself is said to have contributed to this opinion, which has persisted down to the present day.

Influenced by this idea, monks in ancient Ceylon, too, were naturally dissatisfied with the contemporary state of affairs. They did not agree that changes were inevitable and historical ; changes, in their opinion, were only signs of degeneration.

1. *Ibid.* p. 287. The same question was put to the Buddha by Bhaddāli and the same answer was given. There the Buddha explains that he did not lay down rules until occasions presented themselves. M. II, p. 87.

2. S. p. 284.

3. Thera. p. 302 ff. *Pārāpariyatthera-gāthā.*

4. *Ibid.* p. 305 ff.

Therefore a section of monks, who were more other-worldly-minded, turned to the past, as usual, for the ideal holy life. In so doing, they seem to have followed meticulously the letter without understanding the spirit of the teaching of the Buddha, and the result was as can be expected.

We learn from reliable sources that the monks at the time of the Buddha were generally happy and contented. One day Pasenadi, King of Kosala, went to see the Buddha at a town in the Sākyan country, and related several reasons for his devotion to the Master. One of the reasons, he said was that he found in some monasteries samaṇas and brāhamaṇas haggard (*kisa*), coarse (*lūkha*), ugly (*dubbaṇṇa*), pale in appearance (*uppaṇḍuppaṇḍuka-jāta*), and emaciated with the veins showing all over the body (*dhamanisanthatagatta*).

"But, Sir", continued the king, "here I see bhikkhus joyful and elated (*haṭṭha-pahaṭṭha*), jubilant and exultant (*udaggudagga*) enjoying life (*abhiratarūpa*), with senses satisfied (*pīṇitindriya*), free from anxiety (*appossukka*), serene (*pannaloma*), peaceful (*paradavutta*) and living with a gazelle's mind (*migabhūtenacetasā*), i.e., light-hearted. I think, Sir, these venerable ones certainly realize the great and full significance of the Blessed One's teaching."

After he had left, the Buddha requested the monks to learn the words of Pasenadi, thus approving the ideas expressed by the King of Kosala.[1]

This clearly shows that the attitude of bhikkhus to life in early days was happy and healthy. They do not seem to have been brooding gloomily, looking pessimistically at the dark side of the picture.

In answer to a question as to how the complexion of monks, who live a quiet and simple life eating only one meal a day, could be so bright, the Buddha says : "They do not repent the past, nor do they yearn for the future. They live in the present. Therefore their complexion brightens up. By brooding over the future and repenting the past, fools become dried up like a green reed cut down,"[2]

1. M. II, p. 238—*Dhammacetiya-sutta*. 2. S.p. 3.

This healthy attitude seems to have undergone change in the process of time, and "good" monks were expected to adopt a gloomy attitude to life. Both the *Samantapāsādikā* and the *Mahāvaṃsa* contain a story which can be cited in illustration :[1]

"One day the prince (Tissa) when hunting saw gazelles sporting joyously in the wild. And at this sight he thought: 'Even the gazelles sport thus joyously, who feed on grass in the wild. Wherefore are not bhikkhus joyous and gay, who have their food and dwelling in comfort ?'

"Returned home he told the king his thought. To teach him, the king handed over to him the government of the kingdom for one week, saying : 'Enjoy, prince, for one week, my royal state; then will I put thee to death.' Thus said the ruler.

"And when the week was gone by he asked : 'Wherefore art thou thus wasted away?' And when (Tissa) answered: 'By reason of the fear of death', the king spoke again to him and said : 'Thinking that thou must die when the week was gone by, thou wast no longer joyous and gay : how then can ascetics be joyous and gay, my dear, who think ever upon death?"

We should not take this story literally. Its significance is that bhikkhus could not be "joyous and gay" because they were always afraid of death. It is true that bhikkhus are advised to understand death as a natural and inevitable phenomenon. That is the very reason why they are not afraid of it, like ordinary worldly people who have no such deep understanding of life or death. When a person has no worldly attachment, when his mind is free and when he understands the secret of life and death, he has no fear of death. He has no reason to worry or to look gloomy. On the contrary, he becomes the happiest of men. That is why the king of Kosala found the bhikkhus, who had realized the full significance of the dhamma, to be enjoying life with "satisfied senses" and "with a gazelle's mind" as described above.

1. Smp. (SHB) p. 31 ; Mhv. v 154–159. Here the story is quoted as given in the Mhv. I give here Geiger's translation. The word *kīḷanti* means to play or sport as well as to be gay or to enjoy oneself. Geiger has used both meanings in the two contexts quite appropriately : *migā kīḷanti* "gazelles sport". *bhikkhū na kīḷissanti*, "bhikkhus are not joyous and gay."

In later times, "good" bhikkhus began to follow mechanically the rules laid down for them without understanding the spirit behind them. They turned to the past in reaction against comtemporary conditions. Men usually go to extremes in their reactions. In this instance, too, monks in ancient Ceylon seem to have been no exception. They became even more orthodox, more conscientious and more austere than the bhikkhus at the time of the Buddha.

Thus we find during the Brahmana-Tissa famine (1st century B. C.) a monk named Nāga Thera refusing to accept some food offered him by his elder sister Nāga Therī, under the impression that it was not proper for a monk to accept food from a nun.[1]

But here the thera was either ill-informed or over -conscientious. The Vinaya prohibits the acceptance of food from a nun only if she is not a relation. If a bhikkhu accepts food from a nun who is related to him, knowing that she is his relation, there is no transgression according to the Vinaya.[2]

But Nāga Thera seems to have been over-conscientious, and evidently thought: "Well, if it is forbidden to accept food from a nun who is not a relation, why accept food from a nun at all, even if she is your sister? Then there will not be even the slightest chance of transgression."

There is an interesting story in the *Visuddhimagga*[3] which can be cited as a typical example to illustrate how mechanically the pious monks depended on mere discipline for spiritual realization and final emancipation.

Cittagutta Thera lived for more than 60 years in Kuraṇḍaka Mahāleṇa near Mahāgāma in Rohaṇa. In this cave there were some beautiful paintings of the renunciation scenes of the seven Buddhas. Some monks who visited the cave saw these paintings and expressed their appreciation of their beauty to the resident thera. "Friends," he said, "I have lived here for over 60 years. But I did not even know that there were paintings. To-day I learned about them because of those who have eyes."

1. MA. p. 546; DA p. 369.
2. See Pācit, p. 170 ff. The first of the four *Pāṭidesanīyā*.
3. Vsm. p. 29 ff. This was referred to earlier in another context.

We do not know whether the paintings were on the ceiling of the cave or on its walls. But the story says that the thera had not raised his eyes and looked about the cave all these years.[1] There was a big *nāga* (iron-wood) tree in front of this cave. The thera had never looked up at this tree either. He knew that the tree had blossomed only by the pollen that fell yearly on the ground.

The king,[2] who had heard about the great virtues of the thera was anxious to see him and pay homage to him, and invited him three times to come to the capital. But the thera would not come. The king adopted a perverse and unusual device to make the holy man come : he ordered the breasts of all suckling mothers to be tied and sealed, and declared that the children would not get milk till the thera came.

Out of compassion for the little ones, the thera ultimately went to Mahāgāma. The king at once invited the thera to the palace and entertained him. Whether it was the king who worshipped him or whether it was the queen, the thera would always give them blessings saying : "Be happy, O Mahārāja". The other monks remarked : "Sir, regardless of whether it is the king who worships you or the queen, you say, 'Be happy, O Mahārāja'." "I don't discriminate between the king and the queen" was the thera's unconcerned reply.

After a week the king felt that the thera was not at ease in his new surroundings and allowed him to go back. He returned to his cave and attained arahantship the same night.

The *Visuddhimagga* relates this story as an example to the bhikkhu who desires to restrain his senses. There is no doubt that Cittagutta Thera had subjected himself to a tremendously rigorous discipline. But to shut one's eyes and not to look at things is certainly not the kind of restraint that the Buddha advocates.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, monks usually assembled at the Mahāvihāra at Anurādhapura and Tissamahā-

1. *Therena kira ettakaṃ addhānaṃ vasantena cakkhuṃ ummīletvā leṇaṃ na olokitapubbaṃ*—Vsm. p. 29.

2. The king's name is not given. It may have been Kākavaṇṇa-Tissa of Mahāgāma.

vihāra at Mahāgāma before the *vas* season to receive topics of meditation. They met there again after the retreat, when they were expected to announce the results of their spiritual progress during the period. Monks, therefore, made strenuous efforts to gain some definite attainments during the rainy season, for during that period they had a quiet and comparatively comfortable life.

The story of som 50 monks who undertook the *vas* retreat at Galambatittha-vihāra shows how strenuous this effort sometimes was:

These monks made an agreement among themselves on the first day of the rainy season that they should not talk to one another till they had attained arahantship. When they went to the village on *piṇḍapāta*, they had some water in their mouths so that they could not talk. If any one inquired about the date or some other matter, then they swallowed the water and just answered the question to the point. People wondered whether these monks refrained from speaking to villagers only or whether they did not talk to one another either. Some of them therefore went to the vihāra one day with the idea of bringing about a settlement among the monks in case they had quarrelled. No two monks were to be seen together in one place. The monastery was well swept and kept in order. They realized that the vihāra could not be so clean and in such good order, if the monks had quarrelled among themselves. The silence, they discovered, was a kind of vow the monks were observing. The 50 bhikkhus are reported to have attained arahantship before the end of the rainy season.[1]

In the same manner another thera, called Mahānāga of Kālavallimaṇḍapa, spent 23 years in meditation without talking to any one, except to answer an unavoidable question. He is said to have spent the first seven years only walking and standing. He never sat or lay himself down during those seven years.[1] (The fame of this thera as a holy man had spread as far as India).

There was another mechanical and rigorous discipline known as *gatapaccāgata-vatta*, probably a development that took place in Ceylon. Literally, the term means "the observance of going

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DA p. 132 ; MA p. 209 ; VbhA p. 247.

and returning". If a monk, who observes this practice, takes a step forward without being mindful of his *kammaṭṭhāna*, he should step back at once and start out again with the topic of meditation in mind. Sometimes a monk might walk a little distance forgetting his *kammaṭṭhāna*, in which case he had to come back to the place where he forgot it, and start again from there with the *kammaṭṭhāna* in mind. In the same manner, if an impure thought (*kilesa*) arises in his mind while walking, standing, sitting or lying down, he should overcome it in the same posture, without changing it.[1] This practice seems to be a development based on certain methods of meditation described in the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta.*[2]

A thera called Mahā-Phussadeva of Ālindaka is said to have followed this practice for 19 years. He used to stop on his way and go back some distance and start his journey again so often that people used to wonder aloud whether he had lost his way or whether he was only absent-minded. But the thera, without paying attention to these remarks, went on with his meditation and ultimately attained arahantship within 20 years. He was so earnest and sincere that for 19 years he used to shed tears on the last day of each *vas* season, because he could not attain his goal.[3] Mahā-Nāga Thera of Kālavallimaṇḍapa, referred to above, practised *gatapaccāgata-vatta* for 16 years.[4]

Sometimes *gatapaccāgata-vatta* seems to have been extended to the movements of other limbs as well. Thus, a certain mahā-thera, whose name or residence is not given, was one day talking with his pupils. Suddenly he bent his hand, and then stretched it and placed it where it was at first, and again bent it slowly. His pupils were puzzled and enquired why. The mahā-thera said that from the day he began to practise *kammaṭṭhāna*, he had never bent his hand forgetting his meditation. Now, while

1. DA p. 131 ; VbhA pp. 246–247.

2. See *Kāyānupassnā: Iriyāpatha* and *Sampajāna* sections and *Cittānupassanā* in the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* either in D or M.

3. DA p. 131 ; MA. p. 524 ; VbhA, p. 247.

4. DA p. 132 ; VbhA p. 247.

talking with them, he had bent his hand forgetfully. He had therefore put it back in its original position and bent it again.[1]

Another thera, called Mahā-Saṅgharakkhita, is reported to have said before his death, at the age of 80, that he could not remember anything done without mindfulness from the day he entered the Order.[2]

Some of the monks had trained and drilled their minds in such a way that they did not see things objectively. Even when they saw objects they visualized them only subjectively. The *Visuddhimagga* provides a good illustration.[3]

Mahā-Tissa Thera, who lived at Cetiya-pabbata (Mihintalē), seems to have cultivated *aṭṭhika-saññā*, i.e., the habit of seeing the human body only as a structure of bones, i.e., a skeleton.

One morning when he was going on *piṇḍapāta* to Anurādhapura, a lady of Anurādhapura, having quarrelled with her husband, was going away to a relation's house, beautifully dressed "like a goddess".

On seeing the thera she laughed loud, probably with a perverse mind (*vipallatthacittā*). The monk raised his eyes and saw her teeth, and the idea of the impurity of the body (*asubhasaññā*) which he had cultivated so long and so intensely came to his mind at once. Her teeth merely recalled to his mind the idea of a skeleton. He is said to have attained arahantship at that very spot.

A little later her husband, who was following her, met the thera on the way and asked him if he had seen a woman going that way. The arahant replied : "I do not know whether it was a woman or a man that went this way. But a skeleton (*aṭṭhisaṅghāṭo*) was going along the high road."

In the previous chapter in which the daily routine of monks was discussed, reference was made to the time-table of monks who were devoted to meditation.

A monk given to meditation was expected not to forget his topic of meditation even for a moment. He was expected to

1. DA p. 137 ; MA p. 214 ; VbhA p. 252.
2. Vsm. p. 36.
3. *Ibid.* p. 16.

spend the day in the two postures of walking (*caṅkamana*) and sitting (*nisajjā*) only. He may sleep in the first and second watches of the night, but should get up in the third watch and spend that part of the night, walking and sitting only.

Early in the morning he should attend to the duties at the Cetiya and the Bodhi ; he should also store a supply of water for washing and drinking for the day and attend on his teacher. After attending to his own bodily needs he should sit down in his room and meditate till it is time for his alms-round. He should not forget his topic of meditation while getting ready for *piṇḍapāta*.

Before setting out, he should worship the Cetiya and the Bodhi. He may leave aside his topic of meditation only while engaged in worship. But if his topic is the Buddha himself, then he can go on with it without a break.

When he is out on *piṇḍapāta*, people may invite him to their houses, offer him some gruel as breakfast, and request him to wait for lunch. If he agrees, they may ask him questions or express their wish to hear something till the food is ready. On such occasions he should give them a talk on the dhamma, for no religious talk is devoid of meditation.[1]

The meditating monk is advised not to go to big religious festivals, such as consecration ceremonies of cetiyas and large-scale preaching-festivals. On such occasions men and women come in thousands beautifully dressed and the meditator's mind may be disturbed by these attractions. Even his holy life may end there. He should even avoid seeing famous theras who are always surrounded by crowds of people. He may attend at these places only if he is certain that there would be no danger to his spiritual life.[2]

The austerity, simplicity, detachment and moral discipline of some of the monks, as revealed by ancient records, are really amazing.

A mahā-thera of Cittala-pabbata (Situlpavva) says that his body had not been touched by anyone for 60 years, and after 60

1. DA. pp. 129–130 ; VbhA p. 245.
2. DA. p. 128 ; MA pp. 205–206.

years he allowed only Maliya-Deva Thera to touch his body and bathe him, as a special honour for the latter's great spiritual and intellectual attainments.[1]

Mahā-mitta Thera declared to his sister who was herself a nun, that he had not looked at a woman "with a craving mind" (*lobhasahagatacittena*) from the day he became a monk. The thera had to make this statement because his sister had gone to him to get some medicine at the request of their mother who was suffering from a bad boil. He said he had no other medicine except this virtue, and requested his sister to go and repeat this truth and foment her mother's boil. It is reported that the boil dried up when this was done.[2]

At Anurādhapura a certain Paṃsukūlika thera once picked up with extreme joy a cast-away garment which was fouled with the excreta of a man who had had indigestion the previous night.[3]

How simple and detached was the life some of the monks in ancient Ceylon led can be seen from a story in the *Visuddhimagga.*[4]

Two friends became monks at Thūpārāma at Anurādhapura.[5] After study and training for five years, one of them went away to a place called Pācīnakhaṇḍarājī, to the east of the city, while the other remained at the Thūpārāma. Pācīnakhaṇḍarājī was a comfortable place suitable for meditation. After several years the monk who was at Pācīnakhaṇḍarājī went to Thūpārāma to inform his friend of the agreeable nature of his residence.

The monk at the Thupārāma received him with kindness and showed him great courtesy. The guest was tired and thought to himself : "Now my friend will send me some ghee or treacle or some drink. He has lived in this city for a long time." But he did not receive anything for the night.

1. MA. pp. 1024–1025.
2. Vsm. p. 30.
3. AA. p. 489. For a description of Paṃsukūlikas see above p. 195.
4. Vsm. pp. 67–68
5. The Vsm. p. 67 says : *dve kira kulaputtā Anurādhapurā nikkhamitvā Thūpārāme pabbajiṃsu* "two respectable young men went away from Anurādhapura and joined the Order at Thūpārāma." This shows that Thūpārāma was outside of the city of Anurādhapura. What is popularly known as Anurādhapura today is the area of monasteries such as the Mahāvihāra, Abhayagiri and Jetavana, and not the site of the ancient capital.

In the morning again he expected his friend to give him gruel and something to eat. But nothing was forthcoming. "Well," he thought, "people don't evidently send things here. But they will give us something when we go to them."

Strange though it may sound, early in the morning the host invited his guest to go out with him in search of something for their breakfast. That was the only way he could entertain his revered guest. But after going round a street, they received only a little gruel, and the guest thought: "Well, perhaps there is no definite arrangement about breakfast. But people may provide a good meal for lunch." But they did not get anything substantial for their lunch either.

After the meal,[1] the guest inquired whether his friend always lived like that. "Yes," was the answer. "Sir," said the guest, "Pācīnakhaṇḍarājī is comfortable. Let us go there."

A little while later, the monk of the Thūpārāma was seen going out from the southern gate and taking the road towards Kumbhakāra-gāma (Potters' village). The other monk inquired why he was taking that road. "My friend," said the host, "didn't you praise Pācīnakhaṇḍarājī?" "Yes, Sir," said the visitor, "but isn't there anything left at your place where you have lived for such a long time?" "Why, there are a bed and a chair belonging to the Sangha," said the thera, "they have already been properly put away. There is nothing more." "But, Sir," replied the visitor, "I have left my walking-stick (*kattaradaṇḍa*), oil-can (*tela-nāḷi*), and sandal-case (*upāhanatthavikā*) there." "What!" exclaimed the thera, "you have left so many things after staying there only one day."

The monk from Pācīnakhaṇḍarājī was greatly struck with his friend's extreme simplicity and detachment, and said : "Sir, wherever you may stay, it is a forest-dwelling for you. It would be better for you to remain here at the Thūpārāma which is a sacred place." So the next day he went back alone to Pācīnakhaṇḍarājī.

1. From the sequel we can gather that they ate their meal somewhere outside, without returning to their cell.

We find in the same source[1] another touching story which shows how detached some monks were from worldly connections. A young boy became a monk at the vihāra in the village Koraṇḍaka under a thera who was his maternal uncle, and went to Rohaṇa for his studies. The young monk's mother used to inquire frequently about her son from the thera who was her brother. The boy never visited his parents after he went to Rohaṇa.

One day, the thera set out for Rohaṇa to bring back the young monk, and the latter, too, had set out from Rohaṇa with the idea of seeing his preceptor (uncle) and his mother. Both of them met at the river (Mahavāli-ganga ?) and informed each other of the purpose of their journey. The thera remained at a place near the river to spend the *vas* retreat, and the young monk proceeded to Koraṇḍaka vihāra.

He arrived there on the eve of the *vas* retreat, and as his residence the lodging made by his own father was assigned to him. His father who came to the vihāra the next day found that his lodging had been given to a new monk who had come there to spend the *vas* retreat. He informed the young monk that there was a custom that any bhikkhu who occupied that lodging should accept meals at his house all the three months, and should inform him before going away after the "retreat". The young monk agreed in silence.

He went to his parents' house daily and enjoyed their hospitality. But the parents could not recognize their son ; he was so completely changed ; he had left home when he was quite young and now for the first time returned home a grown up man after many long years. The young monk too never thought it was necessary to reveal his identity.

According to the Vinaya, there is nothing wrong if a monk maintains close relations with his parents. He is allowed to give them medical treatment, and even to look after them if necessary.[2] But this young monk seems to have thought it best to keep aloof even from his parents. His interest was only to learn of their well-being.

1. Vsm. pp. 68–69.
2. Smp. (SHB) p. 335.

So the parents entertained their son for full three months without knowing that they were entertaining their son. At the end of the *vas* retreat, when they were informed of his departure, they filled his can with oil and offered him a cloth, nine cubits long, and a lump of sugar.

The young monk set out for Rohaṇa, and met his preceptor again on the way. The thera was pleased to learn that the young monk had seen his mother and enjoyed her hospitality, but did not know that the parents entertained their son without recognizing him.

The pupil massaged his preceptor's feet with oil, gave him a drink prepared with sugar, and also offered him the cloth he had received from his parents.

When the thera was seen coming back alone to the village, his sister concluded that he had returned alone because her son was dead. She ran forward, therefore, and fell at her brother's feet and began to cry. Then only did the thera realize that evidently the young monk had gone away without revealing his identity because of his great detachment. He related the whole story to his sister, and showed her, as evidence, the cloth she had given to her son.

Then, overwhelmed with her son's marvellous character, she fell on the ground, with her hands clasped in the direction her son went, and exclaimed with joy and filial love : "My son is a wonderful person. It is for such men that the Buddha preached his path of great virtue."

It is not necessary to give details of various monks who observed ascetic practices called *dhutaṅgas*. Those who followed the *piṇḍapātika*, *paṃsukūlika* and *āraññika dhutaṅgas* are more frequently met with. Relevant references to them have been made elsewhere.[1]

1. *Āraññikaṅga* or forest-dwelling was sometimes dangerous. Dangerous robbers at times are said to have tied up these innocent monks and gone away, for reasons not known to us. Two such monks are reported to have died in bondage (Vsm. p. 27). Another monk who was meditating in Gavaravāliya-aṅgaṇa was shot with an arrow in the night by a hunter under the impression that he was a deer (MA p. 190).

The fame of Ceylon as a land of religion where the monks followed a strictly disciplined and austere spiritual life seems to have spread over to other countries.

Two brāhmaṇas of Pāṭaliputta (Patna) in India, for example, are reported to have heard of the fame of Mahānāga Thera of Kālavallimaṇḍapa referred to above. Both of them set out together for Ceylon, but one died on the way, and the other arrived at his destination and became a monk under the thera.[1] A wealthy merchant named Visākha, also from Patna, heard that Tambapaṇṇi-dīpa was an ideal place for the religious life, and came to the Island and became a monk at the Mahāvihāra. He attained arahantship and lived at Cittala-pabbata up to his death.[2]

Fa Hien, who was in Ceylon for several years in the 5th century, bears witness to the fame of Ceylon as a land of holy monks. He mentions a "Śramaṇa of great virtue named Dharmagupta" who lived at Mihintalē. He refers also to a "Śramaṇa of such lofty virtue and so holy and pure in his observance of the disciplinary rules, that the people all surmised that he was an Arhat,"[3]

We get another reliable report about the religious life of the monks of Ceylon in 7th century from Hiuen Tsiang. Though he was not able to visit Ceylon, he had the opportunity of meeting some Sinhalese monks who had gone to India at that time. The Chinese monk records his impressions of monks from Ceylon in the following words : "The priests attend to the moral rules, and were distinguished for their power of abstraction and their wisdom. Their correct conduct was an example for subsequent ages; their manners grave and imposing,"[4]

1. AA. p. 384.
2. Vsm. p. 231.
3. Fa Hien, p. 107.
4. Hiuen Tsiang Bk. XI, p. 247.

13.

ARAHANTS IN CEYLON

The original meaning of the word *arahant*, which comes from the Vedic root *arh*, was "worthy" or "deserving". In pre-Buddhist times, this term seems to have been used even as an honorific title of high officials.[1] But the Buddha adopted the term to denote one who had attained the highest stage in the realization of Nibbāna.[2] A very common and popular term, often substituted for arahant, is *khīṇāsava* (Skt. *kṣīṇāśrava*) "one whose *āsavas* (defilements) have been destroyed."[3]

In the Tipiṭaka arahants are found frequently giving expression to their supreme attainment in the following standard formula : *khīṇā jāti, vusitaṃ brahmacariyaṃ, kataṃ karaṇīyaṃ, nāparaṃ itthattāyāti*, ("destroyed is birth, lived is the holy life, done is what should be done, there is no beyond hereafter.") In the *Chabbisodhana-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*, the Buddha warns his disciples that if a bhikkhu makes this statement, it should neither be accepted nor rejected, but he should be questioned with regard to certain points.[4] If his answers are

1. See e.g. Sat. Br. III, 4, 1, 3; 4, 1, 6; 4, 1, 8 ; S.B.E. XXVI.

2. Likewise, the Buddha adopted the term Brāhmaṇa to signify one who was free from evil, and not one born in the Brahamin caste.

3. There are three *āsavas* : *kāmāsava* "lust for sense-pleasure", *bhavāsava* "desire for existence" and *avijjāsava* "ignorance" or "delusion". Sometimes *diṭṭhāsava* "grasp of false theories" is added, making them four.

4. These questions deal with as to how his mind was liberated with regard to the four common usages (*cattāro vohāra*), viz., the seen (*diṭṭha*) the heard (*suta*), the sensed (*muta*) and the apperceived by the mind (*viññāta*) ; the five aggregates of clinging (*pañca-upādānakkhandhā*) : matter (*rūpa*), feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), mental formations

satisfactory, he should then be accepted as an arahant. The Buddha himself provides us in the same sutta with the correct answers to the questions.[1]

From various suttas in the Nikāyas we learn that an arahant was a person who practised the seven *bojjhaṅgas* : mindfulness (*sati*), investigation (*dhammavicaya*), energy (*viriya*), joy (*pīti*), serenity (*passaddhi*), concentration (*samādhi*) and equanimity (*upekkhā*) ; who had got rid of the five *nīvaraṇas* (hindrances): sensuality (*kāmacchanda*), hatred (*vyāpāda*), sloth-and-torpor (*thīnamiddha*), worry-and-flurry (*uddhacca-kukkucca*) and doubt (*vicikicchā*); who had eradicated the three roots of evil (*tīṇi akusalamūlāni*) : desire (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*); who had cultivated virtuous conduct (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*) ; who had no craving or attachment to the five aggregates (*khandhas*) that constitute human personality; who had cut himself away from the ten *saṃyojanas* (fetters) : belief in a permanent self (*sakkāyadiṭṭhi*), doubt (*vicikicchā*), superstition (*sīlabbataparāmāsa*), sense-desire (*kāmarāga*), hatred (*vyāpāda*), lust for material (*rūparāga*) and non-material things (*arūparāga*), pride (*māna*), excitement (*uddhacca*) and ignorance (*avijjā*) ; who was pure in deed, word and thought; who was free from lust for sense-pleasures (*kāmataṇhā*), desire for existence (*bhavataṇhā*) and desire for non-existence (*vibhavataṇhā*) —in short one who had won emancipation from all evil dispositions (*kilesā*).[2]

Whatever the original conception of arahantship might have been, there is no doubt that it varied later at different times and

(*saṅkhārā*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*); six elements (*cha dhātu*) : extension (*paṭhavi*), cohesion (*āpo*), heat (*tejo*), motion (*vāyo*), space (*ākāsa*) and mind (*viññāna*); the six inner and outer spheres (*cha ajjhattika-bāhirāni āyatanāni*) : eye and visible objects (*cakkhu-rūpa*), ear and sound (*sota-sadda*), nose and odour (*ghāna-gandha*), tongue and taste (*jivhā-rasa*), body and tangible objects (*kāya-phoṭṭhabba*) and mind and cognizable objects (*mano-dhamma*) ; and this animate body and external objects (*imasmiñ ca saviññāṇake kāye bahiddhā ca sabbanimittesu*).

1. The *Chabbisodhana-sutta* is an indication that at the time of the Buddha there were some bhikkhus who claimed arahantship falsely or through hallucination.

2. For details see *Sāmaññaphala-sutta* of the *Dīgha*, *Sabbāsava*, *Mahāsakuludāyi*, *Cetokhila* and *Chabbisodhana suttas* of the *Majjhima* and *Vāseṭṭha-sutta* of the Sn.

in different places. The Pāli Commentaries and Chronicles contain some stories and statements, which incidentally provide us with information that may help us to form an idea as to who were regarded as arahants in ancient Ceylon. We are not concerned either with the authenticity of these conceptions or the genuineness of the stories. Our purpose is only to discuss, according to the available material, how arahantship was regarded historically.

It is said in the Commentaries that at one time there was not a single *puthujjana* bhikkhu (a bhikkhu of the common sort) in the Island,[1] which means that all bhikkhus at that time in Ceylon had attained one of the four stages of the realization of Nibbāna, i.e., they were *sotāpanna*, *sakadāgāmi*, *anāgāmi*, or *arahant*. The Commentarial statement further says that, at another time, *puthujjana* bhikkhus were so rare that they were regarded as curiosities.[2] It is also said that there was not a single seat in any refectory in the villages of Ceylon on which some bhikkhu, after his meal of rice-gruel, had not attained arahantship.[3]

According to a statement in the *Saṃyutta Commentary*,[4] 30,000 bhikkhus standing at the southern gate of the Mahāvihāra had attained arahantship by gazing at the Mahācetiya (Ruvanväli-sāya). In the same way, 30,000 bhikkhus attained arahantship at each of the other three gates of the Mahāvihāra, and also at Pañhamaṇḍapa, at the gate of the Thūpārāma, at the southern gate of the city and on the banks of the Abhaya tank and the Anurādhapura tank. A mahāthera who was a preacher of the *Ariyavaṃsa-sutta* (*Mahā-Ariyavaṃsabhāṇaka thera*), not satisfied with the above figures, says: "What are you talking ? It is possible to say that wherever two feet could be evenly placed within the space visible from the lower terrace of the Mahācetiya, 30,000 bhikkhus have attained arahantship at each of these feet." Another Mahāthera is reported to have stated that the number

1. MA. p. 881 ; DA. p. 654. *Imasmiṃ yeva dīpe ekavāre puthujjana-bhikkhu nāma nāhosi.*

2. *Ekasmiṃ hi kāle paṭivedhakarā bhikkhū bahū honti ; esa bhikkhu puthujjanoti aṅguliṃ pasāretvā dassetabbo hoti.* MA. p. 881 ; DA. p. 654.

3. DA. p. 131 ; MA. p. 208.

4. SA. III, p. 151.

of those who attained arahantship was greater than grains of sand scattered on the courtyard of the Mahācetiya. These figures are meant to refer only to those who attained arahantship within the area of the Mahācetiya at Anurādhapura. The *Vibhaṅga Commentary*[1] says that during the time of the Brāhmaṇa Tissa famine there were 24,000 arahants at Tissamahārāma and Cittala-pabbata.

These and many other references show that the country was full of arahants. Who were they? Were they of the same standard as the famous arahants that lived at the time of the Buddha ? It is not possible for us to know today what actually the ancient arahants in Ceylon were like ; but we can, with the help of the Commentaries and other sources, form a fair idea of the conception of people of the 5th century regarding them.

Arahants were usually fond of solitude and lived in quiet, away from the haunts of men. They did not like to be invited to public places. Thus, Dhammadinna of Talaṅgara was persuaded only with great difficulty to leave his place for Tissamahārāma to go there and give topics of meditation to bhikkhus.[2] Nor did they welcome visitors. It is said of Khujja-Tissa of Maṅgana that he resented even the king's coming to see him.[3] But they too, like other devotees, went on pilgrimage to holy places, such as the Mahācetiya and the Mahābodhi at Anurādhapura, avoiding crowds as far as possible. An arahant who went on pilgrimage to Anurādhapura is reported to have gone to worship the Mahācetiya late in the evening only after all the monks and laymen had left the place, because he wanted to avoid crowds.[4]

One sure criterion of an arahant was that he was free from fear. The *Samantapāsādikā* says that even if a thunderbolt fell on his head, an arahant would not be frightened or disturbed, but if he showed signs of fear, he should be rejected as no arahant.[5]

1. VbhA. p. 314.
2. MA. p. 149 ff.
3. AA. p. 384.
4. MA. p. 698 ; VbhA. p. 204.
5. Smp (SHB) p. 350. *Khīṇāsavassa nāma asaniyāpi matthake patayamānāya bhayaṃ vā chambhitattaṃ vā lomahaṃso vā na hoti. Sacassa bhayaṃ vā chambhitattaṃ vā lomahaṃso vā uppajjati, na tvaṃ arahāti apanetabbo.*

The Pāli Commentaries provide examples in support of this statement. Dhammadinna of Talaṅgara (already referred to) was a famous arahant. His teacher, Mahānāga of Uccavālika, a learned and good old thera, was under the illusion that he was an arahant, though in fact he was only a *puthujjana* in possession of *samādhi*. One day, Dhammadinna paid his teacher a visit, with the idea of disillusioning him. After a discussion, Dhammadinna inquired from his teacher as to when he had realization. To this the latter answered that he had it 60 years earlier. Then Dhammadinna asked the Mahāthera whether he enjoyed *samādhi* as well. On receiving the answer in the affirmative, Dhammadinna requested his teacher to exercise his power of *iddhi* and create an elephant coming towards him in a menacing attitude. Mahānāga complied with his pupil's request, but when he saw the elephant of his own creation coming forward, trunk in mouth, trumpeting fiercely, he got up and tried to run away. But Dhammadinna stopped his teacher by holding the end of his robe and said : "Sir, does an arahant get frightened?" Mahānāga was disillusioned and begged of his pupil to help him. Dhammadinna gave him a topic of meditation, and Mahānāga immediately became an arahant.[1] Dhammadinna is reported to have used the same method on another thera called Mahādatta of Haṅkana and made him an arahant.[2]

The Commentary on the *Majjhima-nikāya* records some amusing stories on this point. King Candamukha-Tissa (103–112 A.C.) is said to have examined the chief monk (*saṅghatthera*) of the Mahāvihāra to verify whether he was really an arahant. The thera was old and his eyesight was weak. When all the bhikkhus had gone out for alms, the king quietly went to the vihāra and nipped his foot, as if it might have been a serpent. The thera, who was unmoved like a "stone-pillar," asked "who is there ?"[3] A certain thera, who was a *Piṇḍapātika*, was under the illusion that he was an arahant. But Dīghabhāṇaka Abhaya Thera had his doubts, and wanted to examine the *Piṇḍapātika*. One day when the *Piṇḍapātika* was bathing in the Kälaṇi river,

1. Vsm. p. 476 ff.
2. MA. p. 150.
3. *Ibid.* p. 869.

Abhaya Thera got a young monk to go secretly under the water and to catch his leg. The *Piṇḍapātika* thought that it was a crocodile and shouted in fear. Thus he was found out to be a *puthujjana.*[1]

The Commentary goes on to say that sometimes there are even *puthujjanas* who are very clever and cannot be frightened. In such cases they should be tested with objects apt to rouse desire and lust. king Vasabha (127-171 A.C.) is reported to have tested a monk in a peculiar way : he invited the monk home and sat near him kneading a kind of salad (*sāḷava*) prepared with *badara* (the fruit of the jujube tree) which was astringent. Saliva came into the thera's mouth, so making it clear that he was no arahant, for arahants have no desire for or pleasure in taste.[1] Dhammadinna, who put his own teacher to the test, is reported to have roused desires that were suppressed for 60 years in an old monk at Cittala-pabbata who was under the illusion that he was an arahant, by getting him to watch a lovely female figure created by himself. When the good man realized that he was not an arahant, he sought Dhammadinna's help.[2]

Another criterion of arahants was that they were not guilty of misconduct or wanton behaviour with their hands and feet. The aged Khujja-Tissa Thera, a famous arahant, was fond of solitude as mentioned above, and was staying in a place called Maṅgaṇa about five *yojanas* from the city of Anurādhapura. He was disinclined to see anyone. When he heard that king Saddhā-Tissa (77-59 B.C.) was coming to see him, he deliberately lay on a bed and started scrawling on the ground, with the idea of disappointing the king.[3] When the king saw the thera engaged in this childish behaviour, he went away without even saluting him with the remark that no arahant would be guilty of such wanton behaviour with his hands.[4]

There was a belief that some *puthujjana* monks highly advanced spiritually could hold arahantship in abeyance and

1. MA. p. 869.
2. *Ibid.* p. 150.
3. Why an arahant who is supposed to be free from all passions, including likes and dislikes (*anunayapaṭigaha*), was anxious to disappoint a devout person who came all the way to see him, is another question.
4. AA. pp. 384–385. *Khīṇāsavānaṃ nāma hatthakukkuccaṃ natthi.*

wait, as if it were, at the entrance to it without actually entering in. Mahā-Saṅgharakkhita was famous as a holy man. When he was lying on his death-bed, at the age of over 80, bhikkhus inquired about his spiritual attainments. He confessed that he was a *puthujjana.* Then his attendant monk told him : "Sir, people from 12 *yojanas* have assembled, thinking that you had entered *parinibbāna* (i.e., died as an arahant). If you die as a *puthujjana,* there will be great disappointment". The old monk said : "With the idea of seeing the Buddha Metteyya I did not cultivate meditation (*vipassanā*). If it is as you say, help me to sit up, and leave me alone." The attendant monk made him sit up and went out. Mahā-saṅgharakkhita attained arahantship before the attendant could go far, and gave him a sign by snapping his fingers.[1]

Another mahāthera of Kaṇṭhakasāla Pariveṇa lay on his death-bed at the age of 80, groaning in severe pain. King Vasabha went to see the thera, and hearing his groans was disappointed and turned back at the door remarking that he would not worship a monk, who, even after 60 years in the Order, was not able to bear a little pain. The attendant monk informed the dying thera that the king had heard his groans and had gone away in disappointment : "Sir, why do you thus disgrace us?" "Then leave me alone," said the thera, and, suppressing his pains, attained arahantship. He then asked the attendant to tell the king to come and worship him.[2]

These examples show that arahantship, that is the realization of Nibbāna, was at least in the opinion of the 5th century Commentators, a thing that one could have ready at hand unattained, but capable of attainment, if necessary, at almost a moment's notice.

According to the Commentarial narratives, arahants seem to have had their own little weaknesses. Dhammadinna of Talaṅgara-tissa-pabbata, to whom reference was made earlier, went to Tissamahārāma on the persistent invitation of the Sangha to give topics of meditation to the bhikkhus of that great monastery.

1. Vsm. p. 36.
2. DA. p. 205.

At the time of his arrival the inmates of the monastery, according to their daily routine, after sweeping the place, were seated on the courtyard of the cetiya meditating on the virtues of the Buddha. There was no one to receive Dhammadinna or to talk to him. When they came to know that it was Dhammadinna they put questions to him. He answered all questions "just like cutting a bundle of lotus stalks with a sharp sword," and striking the ground with the toe of his foot said : "Sirs, even this inanimate great earth knows Dhammadinna's virtues ; but you did not know them." And immediately he rose into the air and went back to Talangara-tissa-pabbata.[1]

This story seems to show that Dhammadinna was displeased and annoyed because he was not received with due honour. He did not wait even to give the topics of meditation to the bhikkhus for which he had been invited.[2]

Sometimes arahants not as highly learned as Dhammadinna showed such annoyance. A certain arahant of Vijayārāma, while giving topics of meditation to two monks, mispronounced the word "*samudda*" as "*samuddha*", with an aspirate. One of the two bhikkhus said : "Sir, is it not '*samudda*'?" "Friends", said the arahant, "whether it is pronounced as *samudda* or *samuddha*, we know that it is the ocean of salt water. You are seekers after the letter, and not the spirit; go and learn the correct pronunciation under the experts of letters at the Mahāvihāra." Obviously, the arahant was displeased, and so he sent the two bhikkhus away without giving them *kammaṭṭhāna*.[3]

A certain arahant at Cittala-pabbata, one fine full moon night, asked the other monks in what postures they had seen bhikkhus entering *parinibbāna* (dying as arahants). Some said they had seen bhikkhus dying on their seats ; others said they had seen some dying seated on the air. Then the arahant thera said : "Now I shall show you how to die walking." Then he made a mark on his *caṅkamana* (cloister-walk) and told them : "I shall

1. MA. pp. 150–151.

2. He should have forgiven them for all their shortcomings, if there were any, for the good of others. After all nothing serious happened. But Dhammadinna was so annoyed that he left the Place at once.

3. MA. p. 827.

go to the other end and on my return I will die only when I come to this mark." And he did die as soon as he trod on the mark.[1] It would appear that this particular arahant wished to establish a record by dying in a novel way.

When the funeral litter of Khujja-Tissa of Maṅgaṇa, referred to above, came through the air to Anurādhapura, thousands of people began to shout with devotion. Mahā-Vyaggha, an arahant of Lohapāsāda came to know about this, and wished himself to be cremated along with Khujja-Tissa in a grand manner. He said :"Let us have a share of the honour won by the meritorious," and took leave of his co-celibates and entered the litter and died there.[2] This suggests that Mahā-Vyaggha liked show and wished for a grand funeral.

A certain arahant (referred to above) was worshipping the Mahācetiya. But he had no flowers to offer. His attendant sāmaṇera, who had *iddhi* powers, came there and asked the thera whether he would offer flowers if he had them. "Yes, sāmaṇera," said the thera, "there is no other cetiya where there are so many relics enshrined in one place. Who will not offer flowers at a unique cetiya like this one if flowers are available?" The sāmaṇera through *iddhi* power brought some beautiful and fragrant flowers in a water-strainer and gave them to his teacher. The thera, accepting the flowers remarked : "The flowers are very few, sāmaṇera, aren't they?"[3] This remark suggests that he was somewhat disappointed with the paucity of the flowers, and that the thera desired more. He had no flowers at all and instead of being pleased and grateful to the sāmaṇera, he complained that there were only a few flowers.

In a certain village an arahant thera and a young bhikkhu were going round for *piṇḍapāta*. At the very first house they received some hot rice-gruel. The thera suffered from flatulence, and thought it would be good for him if he took the gruel while it was hot. So he drank it immediately, sitting on a log of wood that had been brought there by the people to serve as a door step.

1. Vsm. pp. 215–216.
2. AA. p. 385.
3. MA. p. 699.

The young monk was disgusted and remarked that the hungry old man had disgraced them.[1] No Vinaya rule prohibits a monk from sitting down on a log of wood near the road and drinking rice-gruel. But, socially, it was considered improper, and so the young monk thought that the elder's behaviour was disgraceful. Perhaps great saints could afford to ignore social conventions ; yet arahants were usually known to be well mannered and careful in etiquette.

There were arahants who were guilty of improprieties even at the time of the Buddha. All arahants were not equally meticulous about proprieties of behaviour and might commit a minor "offence". Piṇḍola-Bhāradvāja, one of the well-known arahants of the Buddha's day, was reproved by the Master for improper conduct on a certain occasion. The Seṭṭhi (a rich merchant) of Rājagaha had a valuable bowl carved out of sandal-wood and hung it on top of a succession of tall bamboo poles and announced: "The bowl is to be a gift ; if there is any arahant endowed with miraculous powers, let him take it away." Then some of the so-called arahants, like Pūraṇa Kassapa and Makkhalī Gosāla, told the Seṭṭhi that they were arahants and asked for the sandal-wood bowl. The Seṭṭhi said : "If you are an arahant with miraculous powers, take the bowl ; it is yours." But none could remove it from the top of the bamboo pole. Ultimately Piṇḍola-Bhāradvāja told Mahā-Mogglläna : "Venerable Moggallāna, you are an arahant with miraculous powers ; go and take the bowl, it is yours." But Moggallāna declined and said : "Venerable Piṇḍola-Bhāradvāja, you are also an arahant with miraculous powers (*āyasmāpi kho Piṇḍola-Bhāradvājo arahā ceva iddhimā ca*); go and take the bowl, it is yours !" Thereupon Piṇḍola-Bhāradvāja ascended into the air, and, taking the sandal-wood bowl, circled over the city of Rājagaha three times. The whole city received Piṇḍola-Bhāradvāja with great enthusiasm and ovation.

When the Buddha came to know about this demonstration, he sent for Piṇḍola-Bhāradvāja and reproved him, saying: "Bhāradvāja, it is unsuitable, unseemly, improper, not in keeping

1. Smp. (SHB), p. 109 ; Vsm. p. 318.

with a samaṇa, unfitting, a thing that should not be done. How can you, Bhāradvāja, indulge in the performance of superhuman miracles before the laity for the sake of a wretched wooden bowl? Just as a woman exhibits her nudity for the sake of a wretched little coin, even so Bhāradvāja, a performance of superhuman miracles is given by you to the laity for the sake of a wretched wooden bowl."[1] Thereafter the Buddha ordered that the sandalwood bowl be broken into pieces and the pieces distributed among the bhikkhus to make eye-ointment. He also laid down rules prohibiting bhikkhus from exhibiting superhuman miracles to the laity, as well as from using wooden bowls.[2]

This story from the *Cullavagga*, one of the original Vinaya texts, shows clearly that Piṇḍola-Bhāradvāja's performance was not in keeping with the proper conduct of a monk. It was so improper and unseemly that the Buddha says that it was "like a woman exposing her nudity for gain". Perhaps, Moggallāna felt within himself that it was not in keeping with the dignity of a monk, at least with his dignity, to exhibit his miraculous powers to others, on an occasion like that, and hence was not willing to take the bowl from the bamboo pole. But he was not inclined to dissuade Piṇḍola-Bhāradvāja from doing so. Piṇḍola-Bhāradvāja does not seem to have thought of it as improper conduct till the Buddha pointed it out to him. This proves beyond reasonable doubt that an arahant is not perfect in all matters of conduct, and not above committing petty mistakes if the Buddha's guidance was not offered. At least it was so in the opinion of those who compiled the *Cullavagga*.

A story in the *Mahāvaṃsa*[3] shows that arahants were not free from religious and national prejudices. Reference was made earlier to how Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī who was repenting over the destruction of many thousands of human lives in the war was consoled

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1. *Ananucchavikaṃ Bhāradvāja, ananulomikaṃ appatirūpaṃ assāmaṇakaṃ akappiyaṃ akaraṇīyaṃ. Kathaṃ hi nāma Bhāradvāja, chavassa dārupattassa kāraṇā gihīnaṃ uttarimanussadhammaṃ iddhipāṭihāriyaṃ dassessasi? Seyyathāpi Bhāradvāja, mātugāmo chavassa māsakarūpassa kāraṇā hirikopīnaṃ dasseti, evem eva kho tayā Bhāradvāja, chavassa dārupattassa kāraṇā gihīnaṃ uttarimanussadhammaṃ iddhipāṭihāriyaṃ dassitaṃ.*

2. Clvg. pp. 203–205.

3. Mhv. xxv 98–112.

by some arahants. It is useful to quote here the relevant passage verbatim: "When the arahants in Piyaṅgudīpa knew his thought they sent eight arahants to comfort the king. And they, coming in the middle watch of the night, alighted at the palace-gate. Making known that they were come thither through the air they mounted to the terrace of the palace. The great king greeted them, and when he had invited them to be seated and had done them reverence in many ways he asked the reason of their coming. "We are sent by the brotherhood at Piyaṅgudīpa to comfort thee, O lord of men." And thereon the king said again to them : "How shall there be any comfort for me, O Venerable Sirs, since by me was caused the slaughter of a great host numbering millions ?"

"From this deed arises no hindrance in the way to heaven. Only one and a half human beings[1] have been slain here by thee, O lord of men. The one had come into the (three) refuges, the other had taken on himself the five precepts. Unbelievers and men of evil life were the rest, not more to be esteemed than beasts.[2] But as for thee, thou wilt bring glory to the doctrine of the Buddha in manifold ways ; therefore cast away care from thy heart, O ruler of men." Thus exhorted by them the king took comfort."[3]

The *Mahāvaṃsa* clearly says that the above advice was given by eight arahants. But it is absolutely against the spirit of the Buddha's teaching. Destruction of life, in any form, for any purpose, even for the establishment, protection or propagation of Buddhism, can never be justified according to the teaching of the Buddha. The most amusing thing is the ethico-mathematical calculation of one and a half human beings killed in the war. We do not know whether the arahants of the second century B.C. ever expressed such an erroneous view. But we can have no reasonable doubt that the celebrated author of the *Mahāvaṃsa*, who lived in the fifth century, did write these verses in the great national chronicle, which proves that the learned mahā-theras and other responsible people at that time considered this statement

1. *diyaḍḍha-manujā.*
2. *micchādiṭṭhī ca dussīlā sesā pasu-samā matā.*
3. Geiger's translation.

to be worthy of arahants, and so included it in the chronicle. They seem to have held that arahants justified killing for the perpetuation of religion.

The above stories lead us to the conclusion that from quite ancient times—certainly at the time of the Pāli Commentaries—the popular conception of arahantship was ill-defined and rather loose. Arahants were evidently not expected to be entirely free from some, at least, of the minor human blemishes, such as pride and love of display. They had their own weaknesses and idiosyncrasies. What was required was that an arahant should have a reputation for deep piety and scrupulousness in observing the precepts. If he had *iddhi* powers so much the better, but the possession of such powers does not seem to have been regarded as an essential.

Sometimes even *puthujjana* monks who lived a holy life were themselves under hallucination and were regarded by the people as arahants, because their way of life was almost like that of an arahant.[1] Bhikkhus who gave *kammaṭṭhāna* (topics of meditation) were often mistaken for arahants by ordinary monks and laymen,[2] and monks living in caves at Cetiyagiri (Mihintalē), Cittala-pabbata (Situlpavva), Dakkhiṇāgiri and Hatthikucchi (so far not identified) were also generally regarded as arahants by the undiscriminating.[3]

But the Commentary on the *Majjhima-nikāya* states that it is hard for an ordinary man to make out an arahant, and relates a story in illustration. A *khīṇāsava* thera (arahant), who lived at Cittala-pabbata, had as his personal attendant a monk who had entered the Order in his old age. One day, this old attendant was following the arahant carrying his alms-bowl and robe, and asked him : "Sir, what sort of people are the *ariyas*"[4] "*Ariyas* are difficult to know, my friend," said the arahant, "some old people even while attending on *ariyas*, moving with them carrying their alms -bowls and robes, do not know the ariyas."[5]

1. Vsm. pp. 36, 37, 476; MA. pp. 150 ,535, 869 ; Smp. (SHB) p. 350.
2. MA. p. 833.
3. Vsm. p. 89.
4. *Ariya* means "noble one" , and the term is used in opposition to *puthujjana*.
5. MA. p. 18.

14.

THE LAY LIFE I: SOCIAL

In order to understand and appreciate the kind of religious life laymen led in ancient Ceylon, it is necessary to have some idea about their social and economic background.

We saw in Chapter II that in pre-Buddhist Ceylon society was divided into castes and classes in the same way as in India ; but in Buddhist Ceylon the scheme underwent some modifications through Buddhist influence. There was the king as the absolute ruler over the whole state ; his ministers, generals and other officers were drawn from the nobility.

We have seen earlier that there were brāhmaṇas in pre-Buddhist Ceylon, and they are mentioned occasionally in Buddhist Ceylon too.[1] But they were not able to form themselves into a consolidated group as a Sinhalese caste with vested rights and interests. In a Buddhist society they had no religious rites and ceremonies to perform, and their place was occupied by bhikkhus as teachers and advisers of the community. Unlike other castes, brāhmaṇas as a class cannot exist apart from Hinduism, nor can they retain their individuality and status in a society other than Hindu. If any brāhmaṇas were absorbed into the Sinhalese Buddhist community, they lost their individuality automatically, and we hear no more of them as brāhmaṇas. The brāhmaṇas occasionally mentioned were evidently Indian aliens living in Ceylon who could not fit themselves into the social structure of the permanent Sinhalese Buddhist population.

1. Mhv. xix 2 ; xxxiii 37 ; xxxiv 23 ; xxxvii 41 ; xlviii 23, 143, 144 165 ff. ; EZ. I, p. 145, No. 6.

Farmers and merchants formed the Vaiśya caste. In the Sūdra caste were included various craftsmen and menial labourers. Caṇḍālas (out-castes) who were in the lowest stratum of society had their own separate hamlets.[1]

The king had the power to degrade a person to a lower caste as punishment for certain transgressions. Thus, king Bhātiya (38-66 A.C.) is reported to have degraded some people who had eaten beef (*gomaṃsa*) which was a social taboo, by making them scavengers in his palace premises. They were made scavengers because they could not pay the fine imposed on them for their offence. If they had had the means to pay the fine, they might have escaped the degrading punishment. Though they were forced by law into the position of scavengers, they do not seem to have been regarded as real sūdras. For, a little later, we see the same king raising a beautiful daughter of one of those "śūdras" into the position of a member of his harem. We do not know for certain if all those "śūdras" were reinstated into the *status quo ante*. But we are told that the relatives of this beautiful girl enjoyed as a result of this marriage a comfortable life ever after.[2]

Then there were slaves who, though not a caste, formed a separate class. We have seen earlier that they were employed in Buddhist monasteries.[3]

According to the *Samantapāsādikā*[4] there were four kinds of slaves : the first category consisted of domestic slaves, children of slave-women who were slaves from birth (*antojāta*). No slave of this class could be admitted into the Order of the Saṅgha unless he was freed.[5] The *Commentary*[6] relates a story in illustration :

1. Mhv. xxxvii 140 ; Rsv. II, pp. 117, 119. Caṇḍālas in pre-Buddhist Ceylon were discussed in Chapter II. See above p. 18.

2. VbhA. p. 310. Even about the 12th century beef-eaters were regarded as Śūdras. JAG p. 74 includes beef-eaters in the caste of drummers (*beravā caste*).

3. See above p. 146 ff.

4. Smp. (SHB) p. 747.

5. According to the Vinaya no slave should be admited into the order : *na bhikkhave dāso pabbājetabbo, yo pabbājeyya, āpatti dukkaṭassa*—Mbvg. p. 88.

6. Smp (SHB) p. 748.

A slave girl of Anurādhapura runs away from her lord with a man from Rohaṇa. Her son becomes a monk. After his *upasampadā*, the higher ordination, a doubt arises in his mind regarding the purity of his ordination. He inquires from his mother why she had no brother, sister or any other relations. She reveals to him her past history. Being honest and virtuous, the young monk was agitated in his mind, as his ordination was not in keeping with the Vinaya. So he sets out at once for Anurādhapura. He stood before the door of the feudal lord and told him that he was the son of his slave-girl who ran away from him. "If you allow me, I will be a monk : you are my lord," he submitted. Highly pleased the feudal lord said : "Sir, your ordination is pure," freed him and made all arrangments for him to stay at the Mahāvihāra. Later the thera is reported to have attained arahantship.[1]

In the second category was included the slave bought for money (*dhanakkīta*). He might be a son bought of his parents or a slave bought of his master. In either case he becomes a slave, and should not be admitted into the Order of Monks unless and until he is freed.[2]

The third category of slaves consisted of prisoners of war (*karamarānīta*). They might be brought from a foreign country as spoils after a victorious war, or they might be inhabitants of the land imprisoned as punishment for taking part in a grave crime like a rebellion. In either case they could not be admitted into the Order as long as they were under the control of their captors.[3] They could be admitted only when they were freed in a normal way, or when they escaped from custody and went

1. This story indicates that the Vinaya convention accepts some social status as a necessary condition for a successful spiritual life for a monk. The arahantship of this monk was controlled by his mater. If freedom had not been granted by the feudal lord to the monk, he could never have become an arahant as a monk, because his ordination was not pure according to the Vinaya, however-much he might otherwise have developed spiritually. Thus slavery, a social convention, could apparently stand in the way of realization of Nibbāna which is intellectual and spiritual freedom.

2. Later in this chapter we shall find instances of parents mortgaging their children as slaves.

3. We saw earlier that Tamil prisoners of war captured in this manner were given as slaves to monasteries by Silāmeghavaṇṇa. See above p. 140

to another place where they became free again. The second concession was granted in this instance because they had been free men made slaves by force.

The fourth category consists of those who became slaves or servants of their own will (*sāmaṃ dāsavyaṃ upagatā*) for livelihood or for protection. The *dāsas* of this category we shall meet later in this chapter. They too could not be admitted into the Order as long as they were in that condition.[1]

A most important question poses itself at this juncture : Is Buddhism not against the caste-system? How could there be caste or class differences in a Buddhist society?

A superficial answer would be to say that the world does not practise the noble teachings of great Masters like the Buddha or the Christ. But we should go a little deeper into the question here.

It is generally accepted that Buddhism is against the caste-system. But this statement should be made with qualification.

The Buddha refuses to recognize any caste difference in the Sangha. In the *Pahārāda-sutta*[2] he says that just as the rivers of different names lose their identity immediately after they enter the ocean, and are henceforth known as the great ocean, so do the members of the four castes—Kṣatriya, Brāhmaṇa, Vaiśya and Śūdra —lose their former identity as soon as they enter the Order, and are henceforth known as *samaṇā, sakyaputtiyā*, "śramaṇas, the Sākyan sons." It is also well known that the Buddha admitted into his Order men of all castes, including the members of the low castes like Sunīta the scavenger,[3] without the slightest discrimination. One is never debarred from entering the Order because of one's caste. Slaves are not admitted into the Order not because of any caste difference, but because of other social and economic reasons. In fact, slaves do not belong to any particular caste. Similarly, soldiers, robbers, debtors and many

1. Manu. viii 415 gives seven categories of slaves : 1. *dhvajāhṛta* is made captive under a standard ,2. *bhakta-dāsa* serves for his daily food, 3. *gṛhaja* is born in the house, 4. *krīta* is bought, 5. *datrima* is given by another, 6. *pautrika* is inherited from ancestors and 7. *daṇḍadāsa* is enslaved by way of punishment. All the seven kinds in the Manu. are not found in Ceylon.

2. A p. 737.

3. Thera. p. 277 ff.

others were prohibited from entering the Order for various other reasons, but not because of caste.[1] It is quite definite that there was no caste difference whatever in the Sangha at the time of the Buddha.[2]

But the position is somewhat different with regard to lay society. The Buddha could not ignore the caste-system that was firmly established as a social institution in the world in which he lived. He had to take notice of it, though he did not accept it as either necessary or justifiable.

The brāhmaṇa on the other hand upheld the caste-system as a sacred and religious institution, and regarded himself as the noblest, the highest and the purest among men. He treated śūdras as animals, and did not grant them any social, economic or religious rights or privileges enjoyed by other human beings.[3] His attitude was that he alone was purified and not non-brāhmaṇas (*brāhmaṇā'va sujjhanti, no abrāhmaṇā*),[4] thereby denying even spiritual purity to them, particularly to śūdras.

The Buddha was a formidable opponent of this egotistic and selfish brāhmaṇic attitude. In opposing this unbearable social tyranny, the Buddha's immediate interest was not so much to denounce the caste-system as an institution, as to denounce brāhmaṇas and to prove that they were not the highest. In some instances, therefore, the Buddha is reported to have proved that kṣatriyas are higher than the brāhmaṇas (*khattiyā'va seṭṭhā, hīnā brāhmaṇā*).[5] But that again is accepting caste-system, the only difference being 'my caste is higher than yours.' Yet the Buddha's attitude can be appreciated if we understand that an attack on the brāhmaṇa was an attack on the whole institution of caste, because the brāhmaṇa was at the root of it.

Instead of a wholesale and outright denunciation, which perhaps was impracticable, the Buddha tried to give an ethical interpretation to the existing caste-system, which the brāhmaṇas

1. See Mhvg. p. 84 ff.
2. But today we find caste difference unofficially in the Sangha in Ceylon.
3. For details see Manu. iv 80, 81 ; viii 413, 414 ; x 96, 129 ; xi 73-87 ; xii 43.
4. See *Aggañña-sutta*, D III, p. 50 ff. ; *Assalāyana-sutta*, M II, p. 262 ff.
5. *Ambaṭṭha-s*, D I, p. 66 ff.

based on birth. The brāhmaṇas vehemently opposed the Buddha's declaration that purity was equal to all four castes (*Samaṇo Gotamo catuvaṇṇaṃ suddhiṃ paññapeti*). In the brāhmaṇic view this was a sinful statement. But the Buddha declared that birth did not produce a *brāhmaṇa* or a *vasala* (outcaste), nor did it prevent one from realizing the higher spiritual life. A virtuous outcaste was higher than an immoral brāhmaṇa.[1] This was a very strong ethical argument, but it again accepted the caste-system in different words, for it pre-supposed the brāhmaṇa as high caste and the vasala as low caste. This was evidently not enough for the Buddha's purpose.

A more serious and scientific analysis of the caste-system and the social structure of the human race (*jātivibhaṅga*) is given in the *Vāseṭṭha-sutta* found both in the *Majjhima-nikāya* and the *Suttanipāta.*[2]

Here the Buddha argues that among the various plants differences by birth can be noticed ; so can differences by birth be seen among the various animals, for a four-footed animal is different from a serpent and a bird is different from a fish ; but there is no such difference by birth to be seen among human beings either with regard to their eyes, nose, mouth, hands, legs or any other member of the body . No one is a brāhmaṇa or a non-brāhmaṇa by birth. A person occupied in agriculture is a farmer and not a brāhmaṇa, one engaged in trade is a merchant and not a brāhmaṇa one who steals is a thief and not a brāhmaṇa. Caste is only a convention.

But this convention, whether the Buddha accepted it or not, was a reality in society the effects of which the people felt. So it had to be explained by the *karma* theory which was a basic teaching of Buddhism, and we find this explanation in the *Culla-kammavibhaṅga-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya.*[3]

1. See *Vasala-s*, Sn (PTS) p. 211 ff.

2. M II, p. 300 ff. ; Sn (PTS) p. 115 ff. The *Vāseṭṭha-sutta* appears to be one of the earliest discourses on this subject. The fact that it is included in the Sn., which is one of the oldest Pāli texts, contributes to its age. 28 of the verses in this sutta are found in the *Brāhmaṇa-vagga* of the *Dhammapada*, itself one of the earliest texts.

3. M III, p. 214 ff.

It says that a man is *born* (*paccājāyati*) in a high caste (*ucca-kulīna*) or in a low caste (*nīcakulīna*) as a result of his karma in a previous birth, just as he short-lived (*appāyuka*) or long-lived (*dīghāyuka*), healthy (*appābādha*) or sickly (*bavhābādha*), beautiful *vaṇṇavanta*) or ugly (*dubbaṇṇa*), powerful (*mahesakkha*) or weak (*appesakkha*), rich (*mahābhoga*) or poor (*appabhoga*), wise (*paññā-vanta*) or foolish (*duppañña*) according to his previous karma.

Thus, all physical, mental, social and economic differences in the world are explained by the karma theory. Consequently, caste is a convention or a reality in the same sense and to the same extent as health, beauty, power, wealth or intellect is a convention or a reality. Whether convention or reality, the Buddha could not completely change it, although he saw the inequality of the whole system.

He did, therefore, the next best thing. He placed morality and virtue above all caste, wealth, beauty, power, health or any other thing in this world, and all these differences faded into insignificance in the spiritual realm of religion.

From the foregoing discussion three ideas come out clearly : (1) Buddhism does not accept the caste-system as justifiable or good; (2) but since the caste-system exists as a reality in society, it is explained by reference to the karma theory ; (3) yet moral and spiritual attainment is higher than any caste.

It is natural that in certain types of society certain ideas become more popular than others. Thus in a feudal society the second was more acceptable than the first. The third idea could not be discarded by any reasonable person, except a diehard brāhmaṇa. Therefore the idea expressed in the *Cullakamma-vibhaṅga-sutta*, viz., one is born in a high or low caste according to one's own previous karma was likely to have been more popular in feudal Ceylon than the idea of the *Vaseṭṭha-sutta*, viz., there is in reality no difference by birth among human beings.[1]

It is obvious that the Sinhalese Buddhist society in ancient Ceylon was influenced by these ideas. There was a caste-system,

1. Of late the first idea, i.e., equality of all human beings by birth, is becoming more popular with the present democratic Ceylon under the influence of modern social, economic and political developments.

but not as rigid as in India.[1] It was purely secular, and not religious like the brāhmanic caste-system. No one was debarred from religious and spiritual rights and privileges however low his caste might be,[2] just as one was not debarred from such rights and privileges because of one's poverty. Low caste, just like poverty, was only the result of a bad karma in a previous birth, which had to be pitied and treated with kindness, according to the Buddhist view point. These various castes had to follow certain customs on occasions of rejoicing and mourning, which they should not violate or transgress.[3]

Although the king was the absolute ruler of the whole state, a measure of democracy seems to have been enjoyed by the people in the affairs of local government which was administered by the king's officers with the help of certain local bodies.[4] The Island was divided into districts or *raṭas*, and they were sub-divided again into groups consisting of about ten villages each for the convenience of administration.

We learn from the Vēvälkäṭiya Slab Inscription[5] that within these groups "justice was administered by means of a Communal Court composed of headmen and responsible householders subject to the authority of the King in Council, the 'Curia Regis'.... This village court was empowered to carry into effect the laws enacted by the King in Council and promulgated by his ministers.

1. But no inter-caste marriages, except between ksatriyas and brāhmaṇas, are reported. The queen of Kuḍḍanāga (248-249 A.C.) was a brāhmaṇa lady (Mhv. xxxvi 23–23 ; Rsv. II, p. 7). Sinhalese - Tamil marriages are reported : Mahādāṭhika Mahānāga (67-79 A.C.) had a Tamil queen, Damiḷa-devī (AA. p. 13). Candamukha-Siva's (103-112 A.C.) queen also was a Tamil lady (Dpv. xxi 45).

2. But the Aṁbagamuva Rock Inscription (E.Z. II, p. 210 ff. lines 34–35) says that Vijayabāhu I (1059-1114 A.C.) had a lower terrace constructed below the upper terrace where the Buddha's foot-print is fixed at Samanola (Adam's Peak) for low caste people (*adhama-jātin*) to worship the Śri Pāda from there. This discrimination at a place of Buddhist worship is unusual and seldom do we hear of such practices elsewhere.

3. E.Z. I, p. 246 or 247 : Vēvalkaṭiya Inscription, lines 32–34.

4. These local bodies were the prototype of the modern *Gamsabāva* or Village Committee in Ceylon.

5. E.Z. I, p. 245 ff.

It could, for example investigate, cases of murder and robbery exact the prescribed fines from law-breakers, and in certain cases even inflict the punishment of death."[1]

In the same manner "local mercantile and other corporations were empowered to levy fines, arrest murderers and in other ways assist the royal officers in the administration of justice."[2] Collective responsibility rested upon the shoulders of the villagers for arresting and producing criminals within their area during a limited period, and fines were imposed on the whole community in case of failure to fulfil this obligation.[3]

Punishments for various offences were extremely cruel and brutal. The death penalty, cutting off limbs, branding the body with heated iron, forcing the offender to stand bare-footed on red-hot iron were some of them.[4]

People were often harassed and exploited by the local officers. In such circumstances the villagers sometimes complained to the king when he paid his periodical visits to these various centres, and the king enacted rules prohibiting such illegal and unjust practices.[5]

Sometimes the king himself might harass a man. In such a situation the man was helpless and had no higher authority to appeal to. Even a good king like saddhā-Tissa is reported to have appropriated by force a cow belonging to a poor man named Muṇḍagutta, because the king heard that the cow gave excellent milk. The king was persuaded to do this by a local officer who was angry with the poor man because he failed to supply ghee free of charge to the officer's family regularly.[6] If books do not hesitate to attribute such an incident to a king known to be pious like Saddhā-Tissa, it is not difficult to imagine what the plight of the poor villager might have been at the hands of merciless government officers.

1. Wickremasinghe : E.Z. I, p. 244.
2. Paranavitana : E.Z. III, p. 74.
3. Vēvälkäṭiya Inscription, E.Z. I, 245 ff. lines 14–17.
4. See Vēvälkäṭiya Inscription.
5. See Badulla Pillar Inscription, E.Z. III, p. 74 ff. Also Rsv. II, pp. 139, 181.
6. Rsv. II, p. 33.

In the absence of anything in the nature of a popularly elected Parliament, the masses had no opportunity to develop a political consciousness or a sense of civic rights.

Among the professions and occupations of the poeple, agriculture, as we saw in Chapter II, was the foremost. It was considered such an honourable and important occupation that the king of the land himself took part in it by getting into the field and working with others, as an encouragement for a food drive on occasions of emergency.[1] Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī is reported to have commissioned his brother Tissa to bring under cultivation vast tracts of land in Dīghavāpi (in the Eastern province to the south of the Mahaväli-gaṅga) just before he started his war campaign against Eḷāra.[2]

Rich farmers held the sowing-festival (*vappa-maṅgala*) connected with paddy cultivation on a grand scale, inviting hundreds of people and feeding them on such occasions.[3] Paddy was such a profitable commodity that we hear of an extremely poor man becoming rich by lending on interest a small quantity of paddy which he had collected as his "pay" for winnowing grain in others' fields.[4]

We have seen earlier from the Tōṇigala Inscription that not only paddy, but also other grains were given on interest, and in fact there were "grain-banks" where various kinds of grains could be deposited on good interest. We can infer from the same inscription that besides paddy, other grains were cultivated on a large scale. A wealthy man was generally described as possessing vast amounts of paddy, beans and other grains.[5] The *Mahāvaṃsa* refers to a bean-field cultivated by the famous Goṭhaimbara and his brother.[6]

It is strange that we do not hear often enough about coconut plantations during this period, but they must have been quite

1. *Ibid.* p. 113.
2. *Ibid.* p. 69.
3. *Ibid.* 116.
4. *Ibid.* p. 125.
5. *Ibid.* p. 131.
6. Mhv. xxiii, 51.

common. The *Rasavāhinī*[1] refers to a large coconut plantation at the Kappakandara-vihāra in Rohaṇa. The *Mahāvaṃsa*[2] too mentions a coconut estate three *yojanas* in extent (*nālikerārāmaṃ tiyojanaṃ*) which was given to a monastery called Kurunda by Aggabodhi I (568–601 A. C.). Sugar-cane plantations were also popular, and we hear of sugar-mills as well.[3]

In the 7th century Hiuen Tsiang wrote thus about Ceylon's agricultural prosperity : "The soil is rich and fertile ; the climate is hot ; the ground is regularly cultivated ; flowers and fruits are produced in abundance."[4]

Cattle-breeding was as profitable as cultivation. The price of a milch-cow was something between 8 and 12 *kahāpaṇas*.[5] Usually a cow was milked twice a day—morning and evening.[6] A rich farmer was expected to possess many head of cattle as well as fields, for these animals were essential for agriculture. Cattle breeding was carried on on such a large scale in ancient Ceylon that there were separate villages of cowherds, as we saw in Chapter II, and we hear of herdsmen going out early in the morning to look after cattle and coming back home in the evening.[7] Cattle were reared exclusively for milk and agriculture, and decidedly not for meat, for, as we have seen earlier, beef-eating was a social taboo.

Trade, both internal and foreign, was a great enterprise. We hear of traders going about the country on business,[8] and some went with carts to places like Malaya (Hilly Country) collecting such commodities as ginger (*siṅgivera*).[9] The Badulla Pillar

1. Rsv. II, p. 94.
2. Mhv. xlii 15.
3. AA. p. 277 ; Rsv. II, p. 143. (The Rsv. uses the word *yanta-bhatiṃ* which is interpreted by the *Saddharmālaṅkāraya* as working in a sugar-mill) ; Vsm. p. 21.
4. Hiuen Tsiang : Bk. XI, p. 235.
5. Rsv. II, p. 32 ; AA. p. 277.
6. AA. p. 277.
7. Rsv. II, pp. 22, 154.
8. *Ibid.* p. 136.
9. Mhv. xxxviii 21.

Inscription presents a vivid picture of a market place in the 10th century at Hopiṭigama near Mahiyaṅgaṇa.[1]

In that place different stalls were set apart for the sale of various taxable commodities. Even betel and arecanuts (*bulaṭ puvak*) had to be sold in the stall (*maḍapaya*) intended for them, and if they were sold in any other place, the officers in charge of the market could remove them. All approved weighing and measuring instruments were stamped with a government seal. The "Black-market" (*sora-veḷadam*) was known and was illegal. All commodities had to be declared, and if any commodities were undeclared, tax from those things was to be charged two-fold. Goods were not to be weighed and measured in places not intended for their sale. All trade should cease on *uposatha* days (*pohodā*).

There was a good deal of trade and commerce with foreign countries. We hear of merchants going in sailing vessels to foreign countries on business, some of whom spent several years there.[2] The Tiriyāy Rock Inscription[3] (Sanskrit) speaks of some "companies of merchants who were skilful in navigating the sea, engaged in buying and selling and who (possessed) a display of goods laden in sailing vessels of diverse sorts",[4] in the latter part of the 7th or beginning of the 8th century. These companies were known after the names of well-known Buddhist merchants, Tapassu and Bhalluka, who offered the first meal to the Buddha after his enlightenment and who are also regarded as first to have become *upāsakas* (lay Buddhists) in the world.[5]

1. E.Z. III, p. 74 ff.

2. Rsv. II, pp. 139, 171, 192. Suvaṇṇa-bhūmi is mentioned as one of the countries.

3. E.Z. IV, p. 158 ff. and 314 ff.

4. Paranavitana's translation : E.Z. IV, p. 159.

5. Differences of opinion seem to exist as to whether this inscription referred to some "companies of merchants" that existed in the 7th or 8th century, and as to what exactly is meant by the words *Trapūssakairv-Vallikakairv-Vaṇigganaih* "companies of merchants (named) Trapūssaka and Vallikaka" in the inscription. (See E.Z. IV, pp. 151 ff., 312 ff.). Paranavitana thinks they refer to the merchants Tapassu and Bhalluka and their followers who offered food to the Buddha soon after his enlightenment. Rao Bahadur K.N. Dikshit suggests that it means "the followers of Trapussa and Vallika". B. Ch. Chhabra thinks that the two companies of merchants named Trapūssaka and Vallikaka are not to be identified with Tapassu and Bhalluka and their followers who gave the first meal to

Anurādhapura was the centre of various mercantile companies. From an inscription of Queen Līlāvatī we learn that there were in that city business companies of various countries (*nānādesī vyāpārayan*) even in the 12th century and that support was received from those firms for the establishment and upkeep of a free resthouse to entertain poor people who came to the city from all quarters.[1] Fa Hien tells us that about the 5th century "in the city there were many Vaiśya elders and Sabaean merchants, whose houses are stately and beautiful. The lanes and passages are kept in good order."[2]

Business transactions and agreements were usually written down, and the documents were destroyed when the agreements were fulfilled.[3]

the Buddha, but are to be taken as some merchants who built the shrine at Tiriyāy shortly before this inscription was engraved.

A business firm may be named in several ways : It may be called either after the owner's name or after the name of a well-known person. We find even today in Ceylon Jīvaka Auṣadhālayas, dispensaries named after Jīvaka, the famous physician of the Buddha. In the same way, these mercantile companies seem to have been called after the two famous Buddhist merchants, Tapassu and Bhalluka, who offered the first meal to the Buddha and who were the first Buddhists in the world—which is a very appropriate idea.

The additional *ka* found in the names Trapūssaka and Vallikaka should not present a problem, as it seems to have done. This additional *ka* seems to me to be a suffix usually tagged on, among others, to a personal name when it is used as the name of a guild or a company. Cf. Kaḷahumanaka *niyamatanahi* in the Toṇigala Inscription (E.Z. III, p. 177). Paranavitana translates this as "the assembly of merchants' guild at Kaḷahumana" (E.Z. III, p. 178). But it is better translated as "the merchants' guild called Kaḷahumana", Kaḷahumana (Kāḷasumana) being the name of a person after whom the guild was designated. Cf. also Mahatuba*ka niyama-tanahi* (Labuäṭabäñdigala, E.Z. III, pp. 181, 250). It means "the merchants' guild called Mahatubaka (Mahāthūpa)". This *ka*, which was suffixed to such personal names in accordance with the peculiar Sinhalese usage, was retained in the words Trapussa*ka* and Vallija*ka*, though they were written in Sanskrit. After all they were proper names. Local Pāli and Sanskrit compositions often reveal Sinhalese influence. For example, see above p. xxvi and Jetavanārāma Sanskrit Inscription, E.Z. I, p. 4. ff. It is well-known that *ka* suffix in Sanskrit also can be used for numerous purposes. For the use of this additional *ka* in ancient Ceylon see *Samanne-sanā* (Critical Introduction in Sinhalese) by Yakkaduvē Siri Paññārāma Thera in the *Majjhima-nikāya*, Vidyālaṅkāra Tripiṭaka Publication I (1946 —Intro. p. 25 ff.

1. E.Z. I, p. 179.
2. Fa Hien, p. 104.
3. Rsv. II, pp. 18, 167

We saw in Chapter II that hunting was popular in pre-Buddhist Ceylon. Although destruction of life is against the teaching of the Buddha, some of the poorer people were forced by economic circumstances to take to hunting and fishing as their occupation even in Buddhist Ceylon. Some of them had hunting dogs for the purpose.[1] Sometimes there were separate settlements of hunters (*nesāda-gāma*).[2] Evidently they earned their living by selling meat at neighbouring market places.[3]

Sometimes a hunter was the father of a great thera like Soṇa, the famous preacher. Ultimately Soṇa Thera made his hunter-father a monk, although he was not willing to enter the Order.[4] The majority of the hunters mentioned in literature are reported to have become monks ultimately, and some are even said to have attained arahantship.[5] The wife of a hunter is also reported to have joined the Order of Nuns before her husband became a monk.[6]

There were others who earned their living by fishing and selling fish,[7] and fishing villages are mentioned.[8] Hiuen Tsiang speaks of the pearl-fishing industry in Ceylon in the 7th century.[9] Cock-fighting, too, was known,[10] but we do not know whether it was accompanied by gambling.

Employment was available to workers in places like sugar-mills (*ucchu-yanta*). One poor man is said to have saved 12 *kahāpaṇas* after working in a sugar -mill for six months.[11] Prior

1. MA. p. 887 ; AA. p. 255 ; VbhA. p. 309 ; Mhv. xxxviii 9.
2. Rsv. II, p. 56.
3. See Badulla Pillar Inscription : E.Z. III, p. 76 ; Rsv. II, p. 132—*maṃse vikkiṇitvā puttadāre posento* "maintaining wife and children by selling meat."
4. MA. p. 887 ; AA. p. 255 ; VbhA. p. 309.
5. AA. p. 21 ff. ; Rsv. II, pp. 132, 147.
6. Rsv. II, p. 147.
7. AA. pp. 367, 522 ; MA. p. 1008.
8. Rsv. II, pp. 107, 181.
9. Hiuen Tsiang : Bk. XI, p. 251.
10. VbhA. p. 313—*kukkuṭe yujjhāpesi*.
11. AA. p. 277 ; Rsv. II, p. 143. Sometimes lumps of sugar were given as wages. King Mahāculi Mahā-Tissa who worked in disguise in a sugar-mill is reported to have received lumps of sugar as wages. (Mhv. xxxiv 4).

to this employment, the same man earned his living by selling firewood at Mahāgāma.

Some people earned a living by doing such odd jobs as reaping paddy (*lāyana-kamma*) in others' fields,[1] working in rich houses,[2] and even collecting a little paddy by winnowing the chaff and shaking the straw in abandoned threshing floors of rich farmers.[3]

Although we meet poor people going in search of jobs, there does not seem to have been an acute problem of unemployment at any period. Unemployment was never a problem in a feudal society.

While on one side wealth was accumulated by the land-lords and the merchants, on the other, abject poverty seems to have ravaged the poor. Poverty among the poorer classes was so acute that sometimes parents were compelled to sell or mortgage their children for slavery for a few *kahāpaṇas*. One such man mortgaged his daughter to a rich family for 12 *kahāpaṇas*,[4] while a son was mortgaged by his parents for 8 *kahāpaṇas*.[5] Some parents seem to have regarded even their children as a commodity that would raise money in an emergency. The mother of the mortgaged girl referred to above tells her husband : "Are those who have children poor? This is your daughter, put her in a house, get 12 *kahāpaṇas* and buy a milch-cow."[6]

There was a system whereby one could borrow money and become a servant (*iṇa-dāsa*) to the creditor for a limited period, as a payment of the debt. A woman in Nāga-dīpa had become a day-servant to a rich family on borrowing 60 *kahāpaṇas*. Later she borrowed another 60 on agreement that she would, in addition, be a night-servant (*ratti-dāsī*) as well.[7] We hear also of the man and his wife whose son was mortgaged for 8 *kahāpaṇas* as men-

1. Shv. Ariyagāla-Mahātissassa vatthu.
2. Rsv. II, p. 125.
3. *Ibid.* pp. 125, 149.
4. AA. p. 277 ; Rsv. II, p. 143.
5. Rsv. II, p. 32.
6. *Saputtakā duggatā nāma atthīti. Ayaṃ te dhītā, imaṃ ekasmiṃ kule ṭhapetvā dvādasa kahāpaṇe gaṇhitvā ekaṃ khīradhenuṃ āhara*—AA. p. 277
7. Rsv. II, pp. 17–18.

tioned above, working in a rich man's house as slaves by way of payment of another debt of 60 *kahāpaṇas* they had borrowed from him.[1]

We learned earlier from Fa Hien that in the 5th century the merchants' houses in the city were "stately and beautiful". But we do not know how they were furnished. However, we learn from a reference in the *Majjhima Commentary* that in a minister's house in the village of Mūluppala-vāpi one of the seats was an earthen seat (*thaṇḍila-pīṭhikā*).[2] It was long, and more than one person could sit on it.[3]

We can gather from a casual reference in the *Visuddhimagga*[4] that, in the villages, houses and their surroundings and the roads leading to them were dirty. During the rainy season the village roads were muddy and full of puddles while in the dry season they were dusty, and travellers' bodies were full of dust raised by the wind. Near the houses there were heaps of dirt and refuse covered with flies, and pools of stagnant water full of worms. The surroundings were dirty with the marks of spittle as well as the excreta of dogs and pigs.

The dress of the people seems to have been plain and simple. Generally the upper part of the body was not covered. Men used to wear a cloth below the waist, and another piece of cloth was thrown over the shoulders. Even the early kings do not seem to have worn anything more than this on informal occasions. The *Rasavāhinī* tells us that King Kākavaṇṇa-Tissa was once seen in this dress at Tissamahāvihāra.[5] He thought of offering his upper cloth (*uttarāsaṅga*) to a monk there, but could not do it because he had only one piece of cloth at the moment (*ekasāṭaka-bhāvena nādāsi*). On this account we have no right to infer that the king wore the same kind of dress on state occasions as well.

1. *Ibid.* p. 31.
2. MA. p. 536.
3. The practice of building long earthen seats touching the walls for the purpose of sitting as well as sleeping is still to be found in poor houses in the villages in Ceylon.
4. Vsm. p. 255.
5. Rsv. II, p. 63.

Devotees usually wear a simple dress when they visit a place of worship. Two cloths formed the usual dress for a man.[1]

In addition men used to wear ear-rings and necklaces. The *Mahāvaṃsa*[2] says that on one occasion during the *Akkha-khāyika* famine King Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī sold his ear-rings and gave alms to monks. Once a man called Saṅghāmacca, mortgaged his necklace worth a thousand *kahāpaṇas* for some rice worth a *kahāpaṇa* to give alms to a monk in a moment of exigency.[3]

Shaving the beard does not seem to have been a common practice. We hear that Mahādāṭhika Mahānāga (67–79 A. C.) ordered barbers (*nhāpita*) to work continually at the four gates during the Giribhaṇḍa-pūjā.[4] This was perhaps necessary because most of the pilgrims came without a shave as shaving was not a household habit. Evidently razors were not easily obtained in those days. But arrangements were made on this unique festival day for the pilgrims to shave their beards if they so desired. We can gather from the *Sahassavatthu* that the king (?) was in the habit of shaving, for Saṅghāmacca is reported to have gone to see the king when the latter was taking a shave (*massu-kamma*).[5]

We know very little about the dress of women except that some of them were beautifully dressed like "goddesses" (*devakaññā*).[6] It is difficult to decide how far we can draw inferences from the female figures at Sīgiriya and other places with regard to the female dress, for they may be more conventional and traditional figures than actual representations. In any case, people did on occasion dress artistically, for we hear that both men and women came to big festivals beautifully dressed like "paintings" (*cittakammarūpāni-viya*), according to their means.[7]

1. *Ibid.* pp. 61, 85.
2. Mhv. xxxii 29.
3. Rsv. II, p. 175.
4. Mhv. xxxiv 84.
5. Shv. Sanghāmaccassa vatthu.
6. Vsm. p. 16.
7. DA. p. 128 ; MA. p. 205. The words "like paintings" do not mean that they were dressed in the style of paintings ; the expression is idiomatic and means only they were "very beautiful."

The people appear to have had a great sense of personal beauty. Even the monks were no exception. Once there seems to have been at Anurādhapura something like a "beauty competition" between a monk and the son of a minister. Abhaya Thera and the minister's son were equally handsome, and there was a talk in the town as to who was more handsome. With the idea of seeing them both together, the relatives of the minister's son dressed him beautifully and brought him to worship at the Mahācetiya ; and the thera's mother too sent her son a beautiful robe requesting him to shave his head and put on the new robe, and to come to the Mahācetiya followed by the monks. Both the minister's son and Abhaya Thera are reported to have met at the courtyard of the Mahācetiya, but it is a pity that we do not hear of the decision. Most probably no decision was expected. Nevertheless, we can gather from the story that Abhaya Thera was more handsome, for it is reported that when they met, the thera was mildly sarcastic and referred to an incident in their previous birth.[1]

Generally, well-to-do people ate three times a day.[2] Besides rice, which was the staple food of the people, meals usually consisted of various curries, curd, honey, sweets, butter, green herbs, paddy dried and pounded (*puthukā*) and even lotus roots and stalks (*bhisamulāla*).[3]

Various kinds of meat such as peacock-flesh ((*mayūramaṃsa*), venison and pork (*miga-sūkara-maddava*), hare (*sasa-maṃsa*) and chicken (*kukkuṭa-maṃsa*) seem to have been considered favourite and delicious dishes.[4] Monks were often served with these dishes. There was also a preparation called honied-meat (*madhu-maṃsa*).[5] Certain people, most probably hunters, sometimes ate even

1. Smp. III, (Col. 1900), p. 377. It is said that in a previous birth Abhaya Thera had swept the courtyard of a cetiya, and the minister's son threw away the sweepings. "After taking away the rubbish that I swept, now you come to compete with me" was the thera's remark. Physical beauty is one of the results of the meritorious deed of cleaning a holy, place.

2. Shv. Suranimmala-vatthu.

3. Rsv. II, pp. 24, 180 ; E.Z. III, p. 178.

4. Rsv. II, pp. 10, 91, 128, 181.

5. *Ibid.* p. 180.

monkey-flesh (*vānara-maṃsa*).[1] But beef-eating, as we saw earlier, was a punishable offence. There is nothing to suggest that there was anything like popular vegetarianism in ancient Ceylon.

The culinary art was considered to be of great value to women. We hear that even the beautiful daughters of eminent men, like ministers of state, learnt the art of cookung (*sūpa-sattha* or *pacana-kamma*).[2] Milking cows also was a duty devolving upon the women folk. Even the queen of King Saddhā-Tissa is said to have known how to milk cows.[3]

Liquor seems to have been popular among some people, though it was against the last of the five precepts meant for the laity. Ability to drink a great quantity of liquor was considered a sign of physical strength. The *Rasavāhinī*[4] says that Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī got Suranimmala to drink 16 *nāḷīs* of toddy (liquor) in order to test his strength. Goṭha-imbara, another general of Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī, is also reported to have taken liquor.[5]

Government officers are known to have accepted liquor when they visited villages on official business, and they drank in the company of villagers. From the Badulla Pillar Inscription we learn that sometimes officers demanded liquor from villagers, and even took by force the liquor that was being brought to the village.[6]

Betel-chewing was a common habit, and usually people carried betel-bags with them. It was such a national custom that even kings appear to have carried betel-bags with them. For, the *Mahāvaṃsa* says that Jeṭṭha-Tissa III, committed suicide with a knife that he was wont to keep in his betel-bag (*tambūlatthavi*).[7]

When Vasabha's uncle, a general, was about to go to deliver up his nephew (Vasabha) to King Subha, the general's wife prepared some betel for her husband. The general opened the

1. *Ibid.* p. 147.
2. *Ibid.* p. 45.
3. *Ibid.* pp. 32–34.
4. *Ibid.* p. 84
5. *Ibid.* p. 89.
6. *Ibid.* p. 181 ; E.Z. III, p. 76.
7. Mhv. xliv III.

bundle at the palace-gate, and found that there was no powdered lime (*cuṇṇa*, Sinh. *huṇu*) which was an ingredient necessary for a cud of betel.[1] Perhaps it was etiquette to chew a cud of betel before going to see an eminent person, or may be the General took the betel to offer to the king. Offering betel to persons of high position is a polite national custom even today in Ceylon.

Betel-chewing was so popular that at the Hopiṭigama market-place there was a special stall for the sale of betel and arecanut (*bulat-puvak*).[2]

The ancient Sinhalese evinced a well-developed sense of humour and an aptitude for giving nick-names.[3] Even the kings of the land could not escape being the objects of this practice. For example, the son of King Vasabha is called Vaṇkanāsika-Tissa (Sinh. Vaknähä-Tis 171—174 A. C.) which means "Hook-nosed Tissa". In fact his name was Tissa, and the inscriptions established by his son Gajabāhu I call him Tissa,[4] but they do not speak of his "hook-nose". The author of the *Mahāvaṃsa*, however, in the 5th century called him Vaṅkanāsika-Tissa, because that was how he was popularly known at the time. There were so many Tissas, and ordinary people could not distinguish between them ; so he was called "Hook-nosed Tissa" just to distinguish him from the others, and the *Mahāvaṃsa* followed suit. Kuṭakaṇṇa-Tissa "Tissa-with-the-protruding-ears" (16–38 A.C.) Thullathana, "Big Breast" (59 B.C.), Khallāṭa-Nāga, "Bald-headed Nāga" (50–43 B. C.), Mahādāṭhika Mahānāga, "Big-moustached Mahānāga" (67–79 A.C.), Mittasena Vīhicora (Karalsora), "Mittasena, the Paddy-Thief" (432 A.C.) were some of the nick-names of kings.

Ministers and Generals were also known by such names. One of Vaṭṭa-Gāmaṇī's ministers was known as Kapi-sīsa, "Monkey-Head".[5] His real name is not known to us. The *Rasavāhinī*

1. *Ibid.* xxxv 61–63.
2. E.Z. III, p. 77.
3. This tendency is to be observed among the Sinhalese villagers even today.
4. See E.Z. I. p. 211; III, p, 116.
5. Mhv. xxxiii 70, 71.

tells us that a man in a village in Rohaṇa was called Goḷa, "Ball" by the villagers because he was a bit dwarfish (*īsakaṃ panassa vāmanattā*).[1]

Even the monks were no exception. During the time of Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī a thera was called Godhagatta-Tissa,[2] because he 'was afflicted with a cutaneous complaint which made his skin scaly like that of the godha' (iguana).[3] During the time of Vaṭṭa-Gāmaṇī a thera was known as Bahalamassu-Tissa "Thick-Bearded Tissa."[4]

The stone carvings and sculptures at Anurādhapura and the paintings at Sīgiriya clearly prove that the ancient Sinhalese had a cultured sense of beauty and refinement. The gigantic dāgäbas and the vast irrigation tanks built during this period are an index of the indefatigable perseverance and invincible determination of the nation. The drip-ledges at such inconceivably dizzy heights at Sīgiriya which make the modern visitor giddy just by gazing at them, indicate what tremendously strong and healthy nerves the ancient Sinhalese must have had.

1. Rsv. II, p. 170.
2. Mhv. xxiv 49.
3. Geiger's Mhv. tr. p. 168, n. 2.
4. Mhv. xxxiii 96.

15.

THE LAY LIFE II: RELIGIOUS

Two important statements might be regarded as an index to the orthodox Buddhist attitude towards the religion of the laity in general.

When Anāthapiṇḍika, the Buddha's great supporter, was on his death-bed, Sāriputta, accompanied by Ānanda, visited the patient, and gave him a homily, the subject-matter of which was highly spiritual and metaphysical. The great banker shed tears and said that he had never before heard such a sermon, though he had associated with the Master and the monks for a long time. Sāriputta remarked that lay people could not understand such religious talks, and only the monks could understand them.[1] Commenting on this statement, the Commentary remarks that lay people have a strong craving and attachment to their lands and fields, gold and wealth, wives and children and servants, and that they neither understand nor like to hear a talk that advocates the renunciation of their possessions.[2]

The second statement is found in the *Sigāla-sutta* of the *Dīgha-nikāya*. In it the Buddha lays down that one of the six duties of a monk towards the laity is to show them "the way to heaven" (*sagga*).[3] It is of great significance that it is "the way to heaven"

1. M. III, p. 264 — *na kho gahapati, gihīnaṃ odātavasanānaṃ evarūpī dhammī kathā paṭibhāti; pabbajitānaṃ kho gahapati, evarūpī dhammī kathā paṭibhāti.*

2. MA p. 1011.

3. D III, p. 117 —*saggassa maggaṃ ācikkhati.* The word *sagga* may also be translated as "a state of happiness."

(*saggassa maggaṃ*) and not "the way to emancipation" (*mokkhassa maggaṃ*) that the monks are expected to show to the laity. Obviously, the way to Nibbāna was too difficult for the general masses to traverse.

The religion of the laity in ancient Ceylon was, as a rule, based on this fundamental conception of the limits of their capacity to grasp and follow higher spiritual and intellectual truths. Naturally there are exceptions to every rule.

Certain sermons preached to the laity in ancient Ceylon indicate what kind of ideas appealed to them. The *Dakkhiṇā vibhaṅga-sutta* was one of the popular sermons.[1] It deals with the various degrees of merits acquired by giving alms and gifts to fourteen different individual recipients ranging from the Buddha down to the animals (*pāṭipuggalikā dakkhiṇā*), and also the greater merits of seven kinds of alms given to the Sangha as community (*saṅghagatā dakkhiṇā*). It deals also with the question of how charity becomes pure or impure.[2] These ideas were very interesting and stimulating to the people who were very anxious to acquire some merits for the next world, as they could by giving alms according to their means, in keeping with this classification. The *Vessantara Jātaka* (No. 547) which is regarded as the example of the ideal of charity was a popular sermon too ; it notably aroused humane sentiments.[3]

The *Devadūta-sutta*[4] is another sermon mentioned.[5] It gives a vivid description of the tortures and pains which evil-doers have to undergo in hell. This sermon must have been very useful, in frightening away ignorant and wicked people from evil deeds like killing, stealing and drinking, when they could not appreciate any other moral or social obligations to abstain from evil and to be good.

1. Rsv. II, pp. 163, 189.
2. M. III, p. 256 ff.
3. AA p. 386.
4. M. III, p. 191 ff.
5. Rsv. II, pp. 133, 135. A hunter named Vidhola heard this sermon twice at the Tissamahāvihāra at Mahāgāma.

Some of the sermons were intended to arouse in the listeners an interest in social service. For instance, the *Gilāna-sutta*[1] preached by Deva Thera, inspired King Vohāra-Tissa (269–291 A. C.) to provide medical facilities at the five residences (*pañcāvāsa*).[2] Ilanāga (93–102 A.C.) who was inspired by the ideal of selfless service to one's fellow beings, even at the risk of one's own life, embodied in the *Kapi-Jātaka* (No. 407)[3] preached by Mahā-Paduma Thera, the Jātaka-bhāṇaka of Tulādhāra, restored the two tanks Tissa-vāpi and Dūra-vāpi and some monasteries in Rohaṇa.[4]

Side by side with this kind of popular moral lesson, more difficult suttas like the *Dhammacakka* and the *Satipaṭṭhāna* were also preached to the public.[5] But how many people intelligently understood the meaning of these suttas is very doubtful.[6] The *Satipaṭṭhāna* was held in such high esteem that it was popularly believed that even a ratsnake and some 500 bats were reborn in better states as the result of merely listening to the sound of a recitation of that *Sutta*.[7] Accordingly, we may assume that just in order to gain merits for the next world, the great majority of the people listened to it even if they could not understand it at all.[8] The *Ariyavaṃsa*, which was usually ceremoniously preached was another popular sutta which the devotees were eager to hear.[9]

1. See *s.v.* DPPN.
2. Dpv. xxii 41 ; Mhv. xxxvi 29.
3. See *s.v.* DPPN.
4. Dpv. xxi 42 ; Mhv. xxxv 30–32.
5. Rsv. II, pp. 136, 191 ; DhpA. II, p. 600.
6. But a beautiful girl named Hemā in a village to the west of Anurādhapura is said to have studied the *Dhammacakka* with its commentary (Rsv. II, pp. 136–137).
7. Rsv. II, pp. 132, 190. It was the famous Dhammarakkhita of Talaṅgara who recited the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* to the ratsnake.
8. Even today most of the lay devotees in Ceylon who observe *aṭṭhaṅga sīla* (*aṭa-sil*) on poya days recite the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* from the beginning to the end, usually followed by a Sinhalese paraphrase. Some of them know most of it by heart. But they do not usually understand its significance. Yet they read it and listen to it because they hold it in high esteem and believe they acquire merit by so doing.
9. See below p. 268 ff.

There are other suttas like *Andhakavinda*,[1] *Āsivisopama*,[1] and *Mahā-Buddhasīhanāda*[2] mentioned as famous sermons.[3]

Acquiring merit of various kinds, as security for the next world, was the motive underlying the religion of the laity, from the king down to the poor peasant. Wealth, health, beauty, longevity, intelligence, power, high-caste and the like, which the people desired, were the results of good karma. People tried, therefore, to do good and to be good in order to obtain these happy conditions. It was easier for the ordinary man to do deeds which were considered meritorious than to develop a good and pure spiritual character. We have seen in Chapter XII how hard certain monks strove to attain the higher spiritual states. But with regard to the laity, the spiritual side is seldom mentioned, either in the Pāil commentaries or in the Chronicles, and all their religion seems to be limited to external "meritorious" deeds.

Some laymen seem to have had a note book called *Puñña-potthaka*, "Merit-Book" in which their meritorious deeds were recorded. This was usually intended to be read at the death-bed, so that the dying man might gladden his heart and purify his last thoughts to ensure a good birth. There is no reference to suggest that any bhikkhu had a "Merit-Book".[4] Monks were interested in their spiritual development, and there was no way of recording this in a book. The "Merit-Book", therefore, served no useful purpose for monks while it was a valuable treasure for laymen. Hence, King Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī had a "Merit-Book", and it was read by his secretary (*lekhaka*) at his death-bed.[5] "Merits" recorded in it were deeds like building cetiyas, giving alms to the Sangha and holding festivals,[6]

All meritorious deeds were not equal in value : different deeds produced different results. So the devotees, particularly kings,

1. *s.v.* DPPN.
2. Probably same as *Mahāsīhanāda-sutta*, M. I, p. 72 ff.
3. Rsv. II, p. 63 ; Dpv. xxii 50 ; DhpA II, p. 600.
4. It appears that bhikkhus had a note-book called *muṭṭhi-potthaka*. But in it were written the virtues of the Buddha and the Dhamma, and not one's meritorious deeds. MA. p. 312.
5. AA. p. 366 ; Mhv. xxxii 25.
6. See Mhv. xxxii 26 ff.

were desirous of acquiring as much merit of different kinds as possible. King Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī had heard that the gift of the dhamma was greater than material gifts, and so he tried to preach the *Maṅgala-sutta* at the Lohapāsāda before the Sangha, though he failed in his effort "from reverence for the Sangha."[1] The king wanted to preach not because be could preach or because there was any real necessity for it, but because he wanted to gain that particular "brand of merit" which could be acquired only by preaching. Since he failed in it, he did the next best thing, which was more useful than his own preaching : he made arrangements for preaching the dhamma throughout the Island, giving rewards and gifts to the preachers.[2]

King Mahācūli Mahātissa (17–3 B.C.) who had heard that alms given out of things earned by the sweat of one's brow was highly meritorious, worked in disguise in a paddy field, and with the rice he earned as his wages gave alms to Mahā-Summa Thera. Again he worked disguised as a labourer in a sugar-mill, and the lumps of sugar he earned as his wages he offered to the monks.[3] It was no doubt an interesting and instructive experience for the supreme ruler of a country to work as a wage-earner with peasants and workers, though that was not the prime motive of Mahācūli Mahātissa. Nevertheless he must have got a good deal of useful first-hand knowledge about the lot of the poor.

Sangha-Tissa I (303-307 A. C.) heard in a sermon by Mahādeva Thera of Dāmagallaka (or Dāmahālaka) of the particular merits of rice-gruel, and he made suitable arrangements at the four gates of the city to distribute gruel to the monks.[4]

Particular kinds of merit were sought to be acquired not only to obtain the desired result in the next life, but also to ensure safety in this. We have a graphic example of this in the story of Vasabha (127—171 A. C.). He was told in confidence by an astrologer (*horā-pāṭhaka*) whom he consulted that his life would last only for 12 years. Guarding the secret strictly, he inquired from the Sangha whether there was a way to lengthen life. They

1. Mhv. xxxii 42–43 ; Rev. II, p. 77.
2. *Ibid.* xxxii 44.
3. *Ibid.* xxxiv 2–5.
4. *Ibid.* xxxvi 68–69.

said "yes" and described the way : give water-strainers,[1] offer dwellings, look after the sick, repair ruined buildings, practise the five precepts,[2] and observe the eight precepts[3] on *uposatha* (*pōya*) days. These would lengthen life. Vasabha did all this and more. And, we are told, he ruled for 44 years ! [4]

We have seen earlier how several kings and commoners offered themselves and their children and relatives as "slaves" to monasteries and redeemed them again. All this was done to acquire double-fold merit in one act : first by offering them as "slaves", and then by donating money to monasteries to liberate them from "slavery". The "offering of the kingdom" by several kings to the *Sāsana*, as shown above, was in the same category. The monks were wise, and they always returned the "offer" to the king himself with advice to administer the government justly and righteously.[5]

Religion was often no deterrent to kings when their political power was endangered. They forgot religion and killed one another, even plundered monasteries, as long as they were intent on seizing the throne. But immediately after they ascended the throne they become devoted and religious, and begin to perform "meritorious" activities, mainly to evade the evil consequences of their past. There are many examples of this tendency in history.

1. *Parissāvana* "water-strainer" is one of the 8 requisites of monks (*aṭṭha-parikkhāra*). It is used for straining water before drinking to save the lives of little creatures that may perhaps be in the water.

2. (1) Not to kill ; (2) Not to steal ; (3) Not to commit adultery ; (4) not to tell lies ; and (5) not to take intoxicating drinks.

3. (1) not to kill ; (2) not to steal ; (3) to abstain from sexual life ; (4) Not to tell lies ; (5) Not to take intoxicating drinks ; (6) Not to take solid food after noon ; (7) Not to decorate the body with garlands, perfumes and ointments ; and (8) Not to use highly comfortable and luxurious beds and seats.

4. Mhv. xxxv 71–100.

5. *E.g.*, Saddhā-Tissa offered the kingdom to Kāla-Buddharakkhita. The thera said: "*tumhehi mahārāja, attano pasannākāro kato ; amhe pana amhākaṃ dinnaṃ rajjaṃ tumhākaṃ yeva dema; dhammena samena rajjaṃ kārehi, mahārāja*"-"O great king, you have expressed your sense of devotion. We, on our part, return to you the kingdom given to us. Rule righteously and justly." MA. p. 470. Moggallāna offered the umbrella of the dominion to the Sangha, but they returned it to him: *Chattena saṅghaṃ pūjesi, saṅgho asseva naṃ adā*—(Mhv. xxxix 31).

After relating the various religious activities of Kassapa, the patricide, the *Mahāvaṃsa* says that he was "afraid of the other world."[1] Dāṭhopatissa I seized the valuable objects in the three fraternities and in the relic chambers, carried away the golden images, and broke the umbrella of the cetiya at the Thūpārāma and took away the golden ornaments and precious jewels. Later he repented (*vippaṭisārī*) and to atone for his evils (*desetuṃ pāpaṃ attano*) he built the Sākavatthu-vihāra, endowing it with revenue.[2]

In order to maintain his army Kassapa II, as yuvarāja, broke open the dāgābas at the Thūpārāma and the Dhakkiṇa-vihāra in addition to several other holy places, and seized valuable treasures offered by former kings. But when he became king, with the idea of "destroying his evil kamma" (*nāsaṃ pāpassa kammassa karissāmīti*) he spent liberally and performed many religious deeds, like building and repairing monasteries, granting endowments, and holding festivals and ceremonies.[3]

Buddhism was a refuge and a protection not only in the next world, but also in this. In time of political danger many princes entered the Order of the Sangha to save their lives. For instance, Kaniṭṭha-Tissa (16–38 A.C.) who was afraid of Queen Anulā, became a monk, returned at the opportune moment, killed Anulā and became king.[4] So Silākāla (524–537 A.C.) fled to India and entered the Order for fear of Kassapa I. He returned home as a layman after Kassapa 's death.[5]

But among the rulers of Ceylon there were some who were really pious and religious, like Aggabodhi IV (658–674 A.C.). He was so pious and just and so much loved by the people that, it is said, after his death his ashes were used by the people as medicine.[6]

1. Mhv. xxxix 19—*bhīto so paralokamhā.*
2. *Ibid.* xliv 131–135.
3. *Ibid.* xliv137–151.
4. *Ibid.* xxxiv 29.
5. *Ibid*, xxxix 45–55.
6. *Ibid.* xlvi 37. In what manner his ashes were used as medicine we have no information.

Whatever great differences and distances there might have been between the various strata of society in matters mundane, Buddhism brought them all close together on almost an equal level at the place of worship.[1] Though the king was regarded as supreme and above all other men, on occasions of religious observances he moved freely with the commoners as a devotee. Some of the rulers used to spend the whole day at the monastery observing religious precepts. King Saddhā-Tissa, for example, is said to have spent an *uposatha* (*pōya*) day (*uposatha-kammaṃ karonto*) at Rāja-leṇa at Cetiya-pabbata.[2] The name Rāja-leṇa "King's Cave" suggests that the king usually spent his *pōya* days meditating in this cave. It is quite likely that the other devotees who observed *aṭasil* (*aṭṭhaṅgasīla*) on *pōya* days spent the day at the monastery as well.[3] On one of these occasions, Saddhā-Tissa is reported to have listened during the whole night, standing unrecognized (*aññātakavesena*),[4] to the *Kālakārāma-sutta* preached by Kāla-Buddharakkhita under the Kālatimbaru (*kaḷu-timbiri*) tree (near Kaḷu-diya pokuṇa) at Mihintalē.[5]

Dāṭhopatissa II (650–658 A.C.) was in the habit of observing *uposatha* and listening to the dhamma.[6] But Aggabódhi V (711–717 A.C.) was more democratic than all these. It is said that he observed *aṭa-sil* on *pōya* days "with the people of the Island" and "preached the doctrine to them in order to give them supra-mundane happiness."[7]

On such occasions the king was the spiritual teacher of his subjects and was almost like one of them. Nevertheless, the

1. But we have seen (above p. 237 n. 2) that Vijayabāhu I had constructed a lower terrace at Samanoḷa (Adam's Peak) for low caste people. This was not usual.

2. There is at present at Mihintalē a cave popularly known as Rājagiri-leṇa. Could this be the old Rāja-leṇa ?

3. Those who observe *aṭa-sil* on *pōya* days usually spend the day at the monastery even today.

4. Probably not to disturb the audience.

5. MA. pp. 469–470.

6. Mhv. xlv 25.

7. *Ibid.* xlviii 10—*uposathaṃ upavasati saddhiṃ dīpajanehi so, dhammañ ca tesaṃ deseti dātuṃ lokuttaraṃ sukhaṃ*.

respect due to the ruler of the land was no doubt paid undiminished by his subjects even at the monastery. We can imagine what influence Buddhism had on the Sinhalese people and their kings when we think of a king like Mahācūli Mahātissa who worked like a labourer on account of religious devotion.

The most obvious and outstanding feature of the religion of the laity was their tremendous devotion to the Sangha. This was due to two reasons : first, the monk was the most trusted teacher and guide and friend of the people. He intervened at all critical moments and settled their disputes—even in State affairs. In all matters, great and small, people went to him for advice, guidance and consolation with the greatest trustfulness. Secondly, the monk was even more helpful to them in the next world. Generally, men and women were more anxious about the security and welfare of their next world than this one. It was the monk, and no one else, who could help them there.

"Merit" was the investment that ensured security in the next world. The Sangha is called *puññak-khetta*, "merit-field," where one could sow seeds of merit and reap a good harvest in the next world. If the field was not fertile, the crop would be poor, and the farmer must naturally be unhappy about it. If the Sangha was impure, the charity bestowed on them would bring poor results, and the donors must naturally be unhappy about it. That was one reason why the kings and the people were so anxious about the unblemished purity of the Sangha. There was, of course, another obvious reason for this anxiety : the monks were the teachers and guides of the nation, and if they were corrupt, the whole nation would go astray. If the monks were bad, it would be harmful not only to the monks themselves personally, but also to the whole nation—not only in this world, but in the world to come as well.

The vast majority of people had neither the earnestness nor the peace of mind necessary for practising the higher teaching of the Buddha. Nor did they have the intelligence to understand its significance. But they had the greatest respect and attachment to the religion. They would give their life in its name, even if they did not know what it really meant. So they expected monks, who were the guardians of their life and conscience, here

and hereafter, to practise the religion for them. They would take part in that noble work and acquire some merit vicariously by supporting and protecting a devout Sangha, just as King Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī supported and honoured the preachers in order to acquire some merit of the *dhammadāna* (gift of the doctrine), because he himself was not able to preach.

To the ordinary layman, the monastery was the place where Buddhism was preserved, and no monastery could exist without the monk. Thus, ultimately the monk became the object through which the laity could give expression to all their religious feelings and devotions.

Accordingly, we find a display of devotion and attachment of the laity to the Sangha which is touching and even surprising. We learnt earlier that in the 2nd century B.C., the Chief Secretary of the kingdom, Mahalē Vidurindunāvō, happened to see "a man and a woman in robes" cohabiting in a park at Anurādhapura. He was so miserable and unhappy about having seen such an act committed by two members of the Sangha who were the "guardian deities of our race" (*apa kula-deviyan*), that he is reported to have blamed his own eyes and blinded them by putting sand into them, so that he might never again see a fault of the Sangha. He was very careful that no one else should know about it. But a *rākṣasa* (a super-human being) who watched over his interests spoke to the Chief Secretary about the incident, and Vidurindunāvō was very angry and remonstrated with the *rākṣasa*. The story goes on to say that ultimately the minister's eyes were miraculously restored.[1]

The whole story cannot be taken as literally true. Even if such a thing never happened, the very fact that such sentiments were recorded in the *Dharmapradīpikā* indicates in unequivocal terms how greatly some of the laity were devoted to the Sangha and concerned about their purity, and further how careful they were not to allow the faults of the Sangha to be canvassed in public.

The maintenance of the Saṅgha was the bounden duty of the laity. Therefore, Prince Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī once declared to

1. *Dharmapradīpikā*, p. 322.

one of his aides-de-camp (*cullupaṭṭhāka*) that he could not remember having eaten anything without giving some of it to the Sangha.[1] But later he had once eaten a preparation of pepper (*maricavaṭṭikaṃ*) forgetting the monks, and he is said to have built the Maricavaṭṭi-cetiya as punishment for this laxity.[2]

Upatissa I, Buddhadāsa's son (5th century A.C.), an extremely religious man who used to observe *aṭa-sil* (eight precepts) four days a month regularly, expressed his devotion to the Sangha in a novel manner—just the opposite of Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī : as long as he lived he ate from the Mahāpāli, the public refectory of the Sangha.[3] This was to show that he was the servant of the Sangha. He must have eaten after the monks had been served.

The devotion of the ordinary poor people was more genuine and touching than even that of kings and ministers. The rich had no difficulty in entertaining the Sangha, and there was no need for them to sacrifice anything on that account.

But sometimes poor people fed bhikkhus while they themselves were actually starving. Some of them treated monks as their own children. A poor old *upāsikā* looked after Mahāmitta Thera of Kassaka-leṇa just like her own son. Her daughter treated him as her brother. She fed the monk with the best possible dishes within their means while she and her daughter fed poorly. Mahāmitta was greatly moved one morning when he discovered this overhearing a conversation between the mother and the daughter, and it is said that he became an arahant the same morning out of compassion for the poor old woman.[4]

Some poor people mortgaged even their children to get money in order to maintain the Sangha. Muṇḍagutta, for instance mortgaged his son for eight *kahāpaṇas* to buy a cow so that he might entertain monks.[5] Dārubhaṇḍaka Mahātissa of Mahāgāma mortgaged his daughter for twelve *kahāpaṇas* and bought

1. AA. p. 365.
2. Mhv. xxvi 16–17.
3. *Yāvajīvañ ca so bhuñji mahāpālimhi bhojanaṃ*—Mhv. xxxvii 202–203.
4. DA. p. 570 ; MA. p. 237 ; AA. p. 276 ; VbhA. p. 196.
5. Rsv. II, p. 32.

a cow for the same-purpose.[1] He did even a more surprising thing : he bought a meal for a monk who was in danger of missing his mid-day meal, with all the twelve *kahāpaṇas* he had saved after working in a sugar-mill for six months with the hope of liberating his daughter.[2] The *Rasavāhinī* relates the story of two women, Kiñcisaṅghā and Saddhā-Sumanā, who offered to two monks the clothes they were wearing.[3]

In addition to their devotion to the Sangha in general, some had their intimate and favourite monks, to whom they were personally more attached than to others. King Kuṭakaṇṇa-Tissa (16—38 A. C.), for example, had two such monks. One was Cūla-Sudhamma Thera of Girigāmakaṇṇa. The king learnt from the thera's mother what kinds of food he liked, and specially prepared them for him. It is said, however, that the king was not able to look straight at the thera's face. It was perhaps due both to the thera's personality as well as the king's respect for him. The king's attachment to Tipiṭaka Cullanāga was even more intense. Once the thera had a boil on his finger, and the king out of great love for him put it into his mouth, and the boil burst inside his mouth. The king's love for this thera was so blind, it is said, that he swallowed the pus, thinking that it would be disrespectful if he spat it out. Later on, when the thera was fatally ill, the king attended on him, crying and sobbing.[4]

A certain *upāsikā* in Mahākhīragāma was attached to Tissa of Loṇagiri. She had prepared milk-rice (*khīrabhatta*) for him; although many monks went to her house on *piṇḍapāta*, she would not give it to them. Ultimately she offered it to Tissa when he went there.[5] When Saṅghadattā and her brothers went to a safe place during the Brāhmaṇa-Tissa famine, they took with them Cūlanāga thera who was a friend of the family and looked after him.[6]

1. AA. p. 277.
2. *Ibid.* pp. 277—278.
3. Rsv. II, pp. 47, 50.
4. VbhA. p. 319.
5. MA. p. 545 ; AA. pp. 653–654.
6. Rsv. II, p. 178.

Attending grand festivals and going on pilgrimages were two features that combined entertainment with religion. It is said that people travelled long distances to attend some festivals, beautifully dressed according to their means.[1] Some of them visited places of worship not only in Ceylon but also in India.[2] Sometimes pilgrims received even royal patronage.[3] In the 12th century there was a free alms-hall (*dānaśālāvak*) established by Queen Līlāvatī to give alms (*dan denu sańdahā*) to the poor who came to Anurādhapura from various directions.[4] To open a permanent establishment to give alms to poor people was not usual. It is quite possible that this was established to entertain the poor pilgrims who visited the holy city.

We have seen earlier[5] that in pre-Buddhist Ceylon spirit-worship was one of the popular cults. The arrival of Buddhism did not interfere too much with that belief. In fact, there are many references in early Buddhist texts to spirits or deities residing in parks, forests and various trees.[6] There was no clash therefore between Buddhism and the pre-Buddhist cult of spirit worship. The only difference was that in Buddhist Ceylon all those deities were "converted" to Buddhism. They were very popular with the masses and Buddhists located them almost everywhere.

There were rich and poor among them, just as among human beings.[7] Some of them were so poor that a *devatā* accepted some food from a thera during the Brāhmaṇa-Tissa famine ![8]

Buddhists believed that there were some deities who were very helpful to pious and religious people.[9] In the same manner

1. DA. p. 128 ; MA. p. 205.
2. Rsv. II, p. 30.
3. *Ibid.* II, p. 38.
4. E.Z. I, p. 179.
5. See above. p. 34 ff.
6. Pācit. pp. 38–39 ; N, I. p. 307—*ārāmadevatā, vanadevatā, rukkha devatā, osadhitiṇavanappatisu adhivatthā devatā* ; MA, p. 526.
7. Rsv. II, p. 11.
8. *Ibid.* II, p. 151.
9. For popular belief in *devatās* see Rsv. II, p. 11, 14, 24, 51, 151, 165

they believed in evil spirits, and mention is made of those who could control and employ spirits (*bhūta-vejja*) by the power of incantations (*manta*).[1]

It is only natural that a Buddhist nation should adopt Buddhist names as their own names. Accordingly, we hear of names like Buddhadāsa, Saṅgha-Tissa, Saṅghadatta,[2] Moggallāna Kassapa and Mahinda. King Buddhadāsa is said to have given to his sons the names of the great disciples of the Buddha. The adoption of Buddhist names seems to have become a vogue somewhat later, for no Buddhist names appear among the early Buddhist kings. It is interesting in this connection to observe the influence exercised by different Buddhist relics on personal names. The branch of the Bodhi-tree at Anurādhapura and the Buddha's Tooth, both brought from India, were the two most important Buddhist relics. The Tooth relic was of greater importance, and was always in the royal possession. Many were the kings who compounded the word *dāṭhā* (tooth) with their names, like Dāṭhā-pabhuti, Dāṭhopatissa and Hattha-dāṭha. The name of the daughter of Aggabodhi I was simply Dāṭhā.[3]

In the same manner, the word *Bodhi* also was added to personal names, like Saṅgha-Bodhi and Agga-Bodhi. There was a thera called Bodhi-mātu-Mahātissa.[4] Perhaps the thera's mother was called Bodhi-mātā, the "Mother of the Bodhi." One of the two daughters of Kassapa I was simply called Bodhi.[5] In the 11th century there was a general named Kesadhātu-Kassapa (Hair-Relic-Kassapa).[6] Some added to their name the word *dhātu* "relic" without any specification, as in the case of Dhātu-sena. It may be that there was a belief that the name of a relic added on to a personal name brought blessings and happiness to the person who bore it.

1. Rsv. II, p. 142.
2. *Ibid.* II, p. 181.
3. Mhv. xlii 10. It is interesting to note here that in India the Buddha's Tooth was called *danta*. Cf. Dantapura (the city where the Tooth was kept) and Danta-Kumāra (the prince who brought it to Ceylon). But in Ceylon it was called *dāṭhā* (Sinh. *daḷa*).
4. AA. p. 366.
5. Mhv. xxxix 11.
6. *Ibid.* lvii 65, 67, 69, 74, 75.

In ancient Buddhist Ceylon the *uposatha* (*pōya*) day was a public holiday. We have seen earlier, in the Badulla Pillar Inscription, that all business stopped on *pōya* days. Aggabodhi VIII (801—812 A.C.) had prohibited fish, meat and liquor from being brought into the city on *pōya* days.[1] The *pōya* day was meant for observances like *aṭa-sil* (*aṭṭhaṅga-sīla*) and religious activities. There were four such days in a month : full-moon and new -moon and two quarter-moon days. All these four days were public holidays.

We learn also from Fa Hien that, in the 5th century A.C., the eighth, fourteenth and fifteenth days were treated as holy days. He says : "At the heads of the four principal streets there have been built preaching halls, where, on the eighth, fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month, they spread carpets, and set forth a pulpit, while the monks and the commonalty from all quarters came together to hear the law."[2] It is quite possible that among those who came to listen to the dhamma there were many who observed the *uposatha*, i.e., the eight precepts.

The fame of the Sinhalese as a religious nation had spread beyond the Island's shores, and Hiuen Tsiang, who heard about it, wrote : "They love learning and esteem virtue. They greatly honour religious excellence, and labour in the acquisition of religious merit."[3]

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1. Mhv. xlix 48.
2. Fa Hien, p. 104.
3. Hiuen Tsiang : Bk. XI, p. 235.

16.

CEREMONIES AND FESTIVALS

We have seen in the previous chapter that the vast majority of the lay people were not in a position to understand or practise the essential teachings of the Buddha. But they had the highest regard and deepest devotion to their faith, and they too required a way of giving expression to their religious sentiments. The development of spiritual character was too subtle for them and far beyond their grasp. They needed something more tangible and visible, that appealed to their senses, and rituals, ceremonies and festivals supplied this urgently felt need, in addition to the practices discussed in the previous chapter. What is religion to one may be sacrilege to another. It depends on the degree of spiritual and intellectual evolution of each individual. Although rituals, ceremonies and festivals were not in keeping with the spirit of Buddhism, they were natural and inevitable developments, bound to come when the teaching of the Buddha became a popular state religion.

These festivals, though religious, were not dull or dreary. There were in them liveliness and colour and variety. All religious ceremonies and festivals were accompanied by music, dancing and singing. Kings are reported to have provided dancers and musicians for religious services.[1] These festivals were so attractive that people from long distances assembled to see them.[2]

1. *E.g.*, Bhātiya I (38–66 A.C.). Dpv. xxi 26, 27; xxii 3; Mhv. xxxiv 60.
2. DA. p. 128 ; MA. p. 205 ; VbhA. p. 244 ; Smp (SHB), p. 219.

Almost all public activities were connected with religion. Even secular undertakings were accompanied by some kind of religious ritual.[1]

Unlike today, in ancient times opportunities for public entertainment were few. Religious festivals provided both entertainment and satisfaction of religious sentiment. Therefore, it is not surprising that such ceremonies grew in number and were spread throughout the year. In the following pages some of the principal and important rituals, ceremonies and festivals will be discussed in brief.

PREACHING

Although preaching was primarily an exposition of the dhamma for the edification of the listeners, in later times it assumed the form of a festival. Sometimes people built a great pavilion or hall (*mahā-maṇḍapa*) in a village, and organized whole-night sermons (*sabbarattiṃ dhammasavanaṃ*). On such occasions men and women and children assembled in great numbers from long distances, and as it was difficult for them to get back to their distant homes in wild, rural areas during the night, they usually had to spend the night at the preaching-place, and the sermon, too, had to be prolonged throughout the night.[2] The pulpit was decorated with such ornaments as golden festoons.[3]

Generally, at monasteries preaching started after sunset, and it was announced by beating a gong.[4] The preacher used a fan (*vījanī*), as today.[5]

In a full-dress preaching ceremony, which probably was spread over both day and night, three monks took part as preachers at different stages.[6] The first was called *Divā-kathika*, the "day-preacher". As the term suggests, he performed his duty during

1. Thus, Hiuen Tsiang says that the king himself went to perform religious rites on the occasion of pearl-fishing in a bay. Hiuen Tsiang Bk. XI, p. 251.
2. DA. p. 128 ; MA. p. 205 ; VbhA. p. 244 ; AA. pp. 385–386.
3. Smp (SHB) p. 388.
4. MA. p. 1025 ; Rsv. II, p. 1.
5. DA. p. 535 ; MA. p. 187.
6. AA. pp. 23, 386.

the day time. Most probably, his part was only to recite the text. For, next came the *Pada-bhāṇaka*, the "word-reciter". Evidently, his part was to paraphrase the *sutta* word for word in Sinhalese, without details and explanations. The first did not require much learning, but the second had to be fairly educated. The third, who came last, was the most learned and most important of the three. He it was who, in fact, preached the sermon with details and expositions during the great part of the night. This process must have proved efficacious enabling people to spend the day and night without monotony and weariness.[1]

We have seen in the previous chapter that at Anurādhapura there were preaching halls built at the heads of the four principal streets, and sermons were delivered there four times a month.

ARIYAVAṂSA

Numerous references in Pāli commentaries and early inscriptions show that in ancient Ceylon a very popular and great festival was held to celebrate the preaching of the *Ariyavaṃsa-sutta.*[2] It would appear that during several centuries before and after the fifth century A.C. the *Ariyavaṃsa* was not only a popular sermon, but also an important institution held in high esteem for the perpetuation of which grants were made by kings and ministers and rich people at the time.

The *Mahāvaṃsa* says that King Vohāra-Tissa (269–291 A.C.) had established all over the Island a regular giving of alms at every place where the *Ariyavaṃsa* was preached.[3]

Form the Toṇigala Inscription of the 4th century A.C., we learn that a handsome grant in paddy, *uñdu* and beans was made

1. Day and night preaching for several days was in practice in some parts of Ceylon till recently. This form of preaching was known as *Sañgi-baṇa* "the preaching of the Saṅgiti or Nikāyas".

2. For a comprehensive discussion of the *Ariyavaṃsa* festival see my article on *The Significance of "Ariyavaṃsa"* in the UCR. Vol. I, No. 1, p. 59 ff.

3. Mhv. xxxvi 38. Geiger, in translating this verse, was not certain what the term *Ariyavaṃsa* actually meant, and offered a suggestion: "Lit. book of the holy ones, probably the life-stories of men eminent in the Buddhist church, which were read aloud probably for the edification of the people." (Mhv. tr. p. 268, n. 6). But now we have no doubt that it was the *Ariyavaṃsa-sutta.*

by a person named Deva(ya), the son of Siva(ya). a member of the Council of Ministers, with the stipulation that the capital should remain unspent, and the interest should be utilized for providing meals to the monks at the Yahisapavata monastery (situated most probably at the site of the present Tōṇigala near Vavuniya) for the purpose of conducting the *Ariyavaṃsa*.[1]

Two rock inscriptions from Labuäṭabäňdigala[2] (about the 5th century A.C.) in the North-Central Province record that a certain man called Sirinaka deposited 100 *kahavaṇas* and another person called Naṭalaviṭiya Siva gave 20 *kahavaṇas* to a great monastery known as Devagiri for the purpose of conducting the *Ariyavaṃsa*.[3]

The popularity of this festival can be understood by the many references to it in literature. The *Aṅguttara Commentary*[4] gives an example of a woman who went five *yojanas* suckling her babe to listen to a sermon on the *Ariyavaṃsa* by Dīghabhāṇaka Mahā-Abhaya Thera. In the same Commentary[5] we read that thirty bhikkhus who were in retreat for the rainy season (*vas*) at Gavara-vāla-aṅgaṇa preached the *Mahā-Ariyavaṃsa* fortnightly on *pōya* days.

The *Rasavāhinī*[6] records three stories in which the *Ariyavaṃsa* is referred to : the first is of a thera from the Kuḍḍa-rajja Province going to the Mahāvāpi-vihāra in Mahāgāma[7] to listen to the

1. E.Z. III, p. 177.
2. *Ibid.* III, pp. 250, 251.
3. In all these inscriptions the word used is *Ariyavasa*. Paranavitana translates it as "holy vassa" which is a mistake. See my article on *The Significance of "Ariyavaṃsa"* referred to above.
4. AA, p. 386.
5. *Ibid.* p. 385.
6 Rsv. II, pp. 4, 183, 190.
7. The so-called Nāga-mahāvihāra on the bund of the Yōda-väva (Giant's Tank) on the Tissamahārāma-Kirinda road. The Ven. Gaṇēgama Indasāra Nāyaka Thera, the present incumbent of Tissamahārāma, informs me that the present Nāga-Mahāvihāra is a misnomer, and that it is the old Mahāvāpi-vihāra of the *Rasavāhinī*. H. E. Amarasekara, late Mudaliyar of the Māgam Pattu, it would appear, had given the present name to the vihāra under the wrong impression that it was the old Nāga-Mahāvihāra. The word *yōda* (p. *yodha*) as used in Sinhalese has two meanings : (1) "warrior," (2) "big". Where it means "big", the work *yōda* is interchangeable with maha (P. *mahā*). So the present yōda-väva might have been the Mahāvāpi or Maha-väva of old after which this vihāra was named.

preaching of the *Ariyavaṃsa*, which was an annual occurrence of the place at the time. Further, the story tells us that multitudes assembled there even from distances to listen to this sermon. The second is that during the reign of Dubbiṭṭhi Mahārāja[1] the *Ariyavaṃsa* was preached once every six months at Udumbara-mahāvihāra (Diṁbulāgala),[2] and people assembled there from within four *yojanas*, and elaborate preparations were made for the festival (*mahantaṃ pūjāvidhānaṃ*). The third instance is that of the preaching of *Ariyavaṃsa* as a festival (*Ariyavaṃsa-desanā-mahe vattamāne*) at a monastery called Ariyākara-vihāra near Kumbala-Tissapabbata.

Though the *Ariyavaṃsa* is a "sermon" to be preached, it was so famous that Buddhaghosa mentions it in his *Visuddhimagga* as a proper name, merely calling it *Ariyavaṃsa*, being evidently quite confident that the reader would understand that it was the sermon that was meant. The context in which it occurs seems to indicate also that when an example of a sermon was needed, it was the *Ariyavaṃsa* sermon which came to Buddhaghosa's mind most readily.[3] This is further borne out by the fact that there were certain theras known as *Ariyavaṃsa-bhāṇakas* distinguished for preaching the *Ariyavaṃsa-sutta*, and that they are sometimes quoted as authorities in the dhamma.[4]

What was this *Ariyavaṃsa-sutta*, so important and so popular in ancient Ceylon ?

Numerous commentarial references[5] which are analytical and descriptive of the contents of the *Ariyavaṃsa* lead us to fix as the text of this celebrated sermon a sutta found in *Uruvela-vagga* of the *Catukka-nipāta* in the *Anguttara-nikāya*.[6] It deals with the four *Ariyavaṃsā*, and seems to have been known by several names: *Ariyavaṃsa*, *Mahā-Ariyavaṃsa* and also *Vaṃsa-sutta*.

1. *i.e.*, Mahādāṭhika Mahānāga (67-79 A.C.). For identification see my note on *Dubbiṭṭhi Mahārāja* in the UCR. Vol. I, No. 2, p. 82.

2. Even today, at Diṁbulāgala during *vas* season the *Ariyavaṃsa* is preached, which is significant of the persistence of the old tradition.

3. Vsm. p. 50.

4. SA. III, p. 151.

5. For these references and details see UCR. Vol. I, No. I, pp. 63-64.

6. A. p. 204.

The four sections of the sutta are as follows:

I. A bhikkhu is satisfied with whatever robes he gets, praises the value of contentment in whatever robes he obtains, does not commit any impropriety in order to secure robes, nor does he exalt himself or look down upon others on account of his possession of this quality of contentment. So is he with regard to:

II. Whatever food he gets, and

III. Whatever lodgings he is provided with.[1]

IV. The bhikkhu takes delight in meditation and abandonment (*bhāvanārāmo hoti bhāvanārato, pahānārāmo hoti pahānarato.*) But on account of this quality he does not exalt himself, nor does he look down upon others.

This, in brief, is the *Ariyavaṃsa-sutta*, and it contains the essence of the life of a bhikkhu on whom the perpetuation of the *Sāsana* depends. No wonder then that it is so highly commended in Commentaries and held in esteem both by the Sangha and the laity.

Buddhaghosa's Commentary on the sutta says that by the first three *ariyavaṃsā* the whole of the *Vinaya Piṭaka* would be described, and by the fourth the other two *Piṭakas*. Thus the preacher of this sutta could bring all three *Piṭakas* to bear on his sermon. The Commentary gives further instructions to the preacher as to how the *bhāvanārāma-ariyavaṃsa*, the fourth and most important one, should be elaborated. It should be described, says the Commentator, according to the *Nekkhamma Pāli* in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, the *Dasuttara-sutta* of the *Dīgha*, the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* of the *Majjhima* and the *Niddesa* in the *Abhidhamma*.[2] These detailed instructions to preachers are further indication of its popularity and importance.

Its preaching was accompanied by a festival, as already mentioned, but it is not quite clear whether there was a particular period of the year for its celebration, and if so, what that period was. The *Rasavāhinī* says that at the Mahāvāpi-vihāra at

1. According to the Commentary, *gilānapaccaya* (medical requirements) is included in the *piṇḍapāta* (food) itself. AA. p. 493. ....

2. AA. p. 494.

Mahāgāma the *Ariyavaṃsa* was preached annually and at Diṁbulāgala once in every six months.[1] At the Devagiri-vihāra, too, it was once a year though we are not told when.[2] But the Tōṇigala Inscription specifically lays down that it had to be done on "the twelfth day of the bright half of the month of Nikini during every rainy season".[3] Some thirty bhikkhus who undertook the *vas* during the rainy season at Gavaravāla-angaṇa used to preach the *Ariyavaṃsa* once a fortnight on *poya* days.[4]

When we consider the fact that even today, during the *vas* season, according to the traditional practice, bhikkhus become more religious-minded, perform the *uposatha* ceremony more regularly, and preach to the lay devotees more frequently, it may not be wrong to conclude that the *Ariyavaṃsa* was celebrated regularly during the *vas* season. This is not to deny that it might have been preached during the other seasons of the year according to the wishes of those who performed the celebration.

The fact that kings and ministers and other well-to-do persons contributed generously towards the "performance of the *Ariyavaṃsa*" proves that it was a festival which required a considerable amount of expense. Perhaps, meals and quarters had to be provided for the bhikkhus who came from distances and stayed at the spot for a few days, and temporary sheds perhaps had also to be put up for the multitudes that came to hear the sermon.

There is some reason to suppose that the Ceylon tradition was a continuation of an Indian tradition which was prevalent during Asoka's time. In this connection the mention of *Aliyavasāni* in Asoka's Bhabru Edict is of interest. In this inscription, addressed to the Saṅgha, Asoka recommends the monks and nuns of the Order, and the lay disciples of either sex, frequently to hear and to meditate upon seven selected texts from the Pāli Canon, among which *Aliyavasāni* is included. Opinions differ as to what this

1. Rsv. II, pp. 4, 183.

2. E.Z. III, pp, 250-251—*anahavajarana.*

3. E.Z. III, p. 178—*vanaya vanaya atovasahi Nikamaniyacada puṇamasa doḷasa-paka-divasa.*

4. AA.p. 385. It is significant that even the Sākyan Upananda, that notorious imposter, went about preaching the *Ariyavaṃsa* during the *vas* season. (JA. II, p. 310 ; III, p. 233).

Alsiavasāni actually is.[1] I am inclined to agree with Kosambi, Lanman and Barua that it is the same as the *Ariyavaṃsa-sutta* described above.[2] Thus, perhaps, the tradition of celebrating the *Ariyavaṃsa* may have come from India to Ceylon where it flourished for centuries.

It is not yet known when and why the *Ariyavaṃsa* festival fell from favour. The *Saṅgharāja-sādhu* cariyāva[3] which was written by Ayittāliyaddē Muhandirama who lived in Kandy during the reign of Kīrti-Śrī Rājasiṃha (1747—1780 A.C.) mentions that a Sinhalese *Sanne* paraphrase to the *Ariyavaṃsa-sutta* was written by Bäminịvattē Unnānsē, a pupil of Saranankara Saṅgharāja.[4]

Even today the Ariyavaṃsa festival is not altogether forgotten in Ceylon. Recently at a newly discovered cave-temple near Guruḷabädda in Pasdun Kōraḷē in Ceylon, the *Ariyavaṃsa-sutta* was preached several days during the festival. It was mentioned earlier that this sutta is preached today at Diṁbulāgala during the *vas* season.

VESAK

The Vesak (Pāli Vesākha) festival which is held in the month of Vesak (May) to celebrate the birth of the Buddha[5] was a traditional custom of the State.[6] Vesak seems to be one of the

1. Mookerji's *Asoka*, p. 118, n. 4: Rhys Davids thinks it is in the *Saṅgīti-sutta* of the *Dīgha;* Dharmānanda Kosambi and Lanman identify it with A. II, 28; Hultzsch takes the expression to mean "*ariyavaṃsāni.*" Barua agrees with Dharmānanda Kosambi. (*Inscriptions of Asoka II*, p. 203, n. 6.

2. Usually found in the masculine gender as *cattāro ariyavaṃsā*, but sometimes in the neuter too : *cattāri ariyavṃsāni* (*Paṭisambhidā-magga* I, (PTS) p. 84). Cf. *Aliyavasāni* in this Edict.

3. *Sangharāja-sādhucariyāva*, p. 34.

4. There is an edition of the *Ariyavaṃsa-sutta* and its Pāli Commentary along with an old Sinhalese *sanna* which was published in Colombo in 1898. This, most probably, judging by the language, is the same as Bäminịvattē Unnānsē's work. A notice at the back of this edition says that "the Ven. Payyāgala Siri-Sumana-Tissa Thera, Principal of Vijayānanda Pirivena, Galle, taught this sutta to his pupils and caused them to preach it daily."

5. Dpv. xxi 28. *Vesākhamāse puṇṇamāyaṃ sambuddho upapajjatha, taṃ māsaṃ pūjanatthāya.*

6. Mhv. xliv 46. *Sabbaṃ vesākhapūjādiṃ cārittānugataṃ.*

most ancient Buddhist festivals, celebrated even in India from early days. Fa Hien tells us that about the 5th century "every year, on the eighth day of the second month, they celebrate a procession of images. They make a four-wheeled car and on it erect a structure of five stories by means of bamboos tied together .... They make figures of devas with gold, silver and...... On the four sides are niches, with a Buddha seated in each, and a Bodhisatva standing in attendance on him. There may be twenty cars all grand and imposing, but each one different from the other."[1]

It is necessary to remember here that Asoka's Rock Edict IV records that the Emperor had organized shows and processions in which were exhibited images of gods in their celestial cars with "heavenly sights" attractive and fascinating to the masses. What Fa Hien saw in the 5th century in India was perhaps the continuation of the same old festival with certain modifications and improvements after seven centuries. It is also possible that Mahinda, having seen those shows and processions organized by his father and realized their effect on the mass-mind, introduced the same practice into Ceylon. It may be conjectured, with some justification, that the Ceylon Vesak festival was modelled on Asoka's "shows and processions" and also on "the processions of images" seen by Fa Hien. The Chinese monk says that the Indian procession was held in the second month. Now the second month of the year according to the Indian calendar is Vesākha, and it is possible, therefore, what Fa Hien saw in India was a Vesak festival, though he did not mention it by name.

The first reference in the *Mahāvaṃsa* to the Vesak festival in Ceylon is during the time of Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī (101—77 B.C.) who is said to have celebrated twenty-four Vesak festivals.[2] It is quite likely, however, that the festival was in existence in Ceylon much earlier. Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī was the hero of the ancient Buddhist Ceylon, and perhaps he revived the festival and celebrated it on a grander scale then before. After him many kings are reported to have celebrated the festival regularly : Bhātiya

1. Fa Hien, p. 79.
2. Mhv. xxxii 35.

(38—67 A.C.) twenty-eight Vesak festivals,[1] while Vasabha (127—171 A.C.) celebrated forty-four festivals.[2] These two kings organized regular annual celebrations. Vohāra-Tissa (269–291 A.C.),[3] Goṭhābhaya (309–322 A.C.).[4] Jeṭṭha-Tissa (323–333 A.C.)[5] Dalla-Moggallāna (611–617 A.C.),[6] Sena II (851–885 A.C.),[7] are all mentioned as kings who organized great vesak festivals. The last mentioned king is particularly said to have celebrated the Vesak festival with the poor people, giving them food and drink and clothes as they desired.

Up to this day the Vesak is celebrated in Ceylon with great festivity every year, and free refreshment halls (*dan-säl*) built by Buddhist Societies and individuals throughout the Island entertain the pilgrims who visit holy places on that day.

GIRIBHAṆḌA PŪJĀ

The famous Giribhaṇḍa-pūjā seems to have been originated by Mahādāṭhika Mahānāga (67—79 A.C.). Having completed the building of the Mahāthūpa at Mihintalē, a task of great difficulty, the king organized this grand festival which was like a carnival to celebrate the historic occasion. Within the radius of a *yojana* of Mihintalē the whole place was magnificently decorated. A road was constructed running round the mountain and four gateways erected. On either side of the streets shops and stores were opened. The roads were adorned with flags, arches and triumphal gates illuminated all with rows of lamps. Dancing, singing and music added to the merriment of the occasion. The road from the Kadambanadī (Malvatu-oya) to Mihintalē was covered with carpets so that the devotees might walk with clean feet after their ablutions at the river. At the four gates of the city a great alms-giving was organized. Over the whole Island an unbroken chain of lamps was lighted. Even over the sea

1. Mhv. xxxiv 59.
2. *Ibid.* xxxv 100.
3. *Ibid.* xxxvi 40.
4. *Ibid.* xxxvi 109; Dpv. xxii 59.
5. Mhv. xxxvi 130.
6. *Ibid.* xliv 46.
7. *Ibid.* li 84.

lamps were lighted within a distance of a *yojana* round the Island. To the great multitude of monks assembled at this consecration-ceremony of the thūpa, alms and gifts were offered at eight places with the beating of eight golden drums. A remission of the prison penalties (*bandhamokkha*) was also ordered. Barbers were employed to carry on their work continually at the four gates.[1]

Why this grand festival was called Giribhaṇḍa-pūjā is not quite clear.[2] Whatever the correct meaning of the term may be, it is quite clear that great offerings were made at this festival, and all sources agree that it was organized by Mahādāṭhika Mahānāga.[3]

Although Giribhaṇḍa-pūjā was a festival famous in history, we do not hear of its celebration by other kings. Eight centuries later, Udaya II (885–896 A.C.) is reported to have restored a vihāra called Giribhaṇḍa.[4] But whether this was a vihāra at Mihintalē connected with Mahādāṭhika's Giribhaṇḍa-pūjā or a different vihāra we are not certain.

GAṄGĀROHAṆA

Buddhadāsa's son Upatissa I has the honour of inaugurating a ceremony called Gaṅgārohaṇa in the early 5th century. At the time the Island was afflicted by famine and disease. The king inquired from the Sangha if anything was done by the Buddha in such a situation to alleviate the suffering of the people, and the

1. Mhv. xxxiv 68-84.

2. Of course *giri* means "mountain", *bhaṇḍa* means "goods" and *pūjā* means "offering" or "ceremony." But what do the words together indicate ? They could be interpreted to mean "offering of goods on the mountain " or " offering of a mountain of goods." Sometimes this festival is called Giribhaṇḍa-gahaṇa-pūjā "the ceremony of taking goods on the mountain" (Dpv. xxi 32), and also Giribhaṇḍa-vāhana-pūjā "the ceremony of bearing goods on the mountain," (Vam. p. 280 ; AA. p. 13). The *Rasavāhinī* II, p. 185 reads the term Girimaṇḍa-mahā-pūjā "the great mountain offering." The Pāli Commentaries refer to this festival in connection with Tissa Thera of Loṇagiri who received the best pair of cloths at this ceremony. (DA. p. 369 ; MA. p. 545 ; AA. p. 654).

3. The Rsv. II, p. 185, says that it was organized by Dubbiṭṭhi Mahārāja. But there is no doubt he was the same as Mahādāṭhika Mahānāga. For identification of these two names see my note on *Dubbiṭṭhi Mahārāja* in UCR. Vol. I, No. 2, p. 82.

4. Mhv. xlix 29.

monks described to him how the *Ratana-sutta*[1] was recited by the Buddha when Vesāli was visited by such a calamity.[2] Thereupon the king had a golden image of the Buddha made, and placing in its hands the Buddha's stone alms-bowl filled with water, mounted it on a chariot. Then he organized a great alms-giving and ordered the citizens to observe the moral precepts (*sīla*), himself observing them.

The city was beautifully decorated, and a large crowd of monks following the chariot with the golden Buddha image walked the whole night round the streets reciting the *Ratana-sutta* and sprinkling water.[3] The king himself took part in the ceremony, walking with the monks. Rains came and famine and pestilence disappeared. Upatissa decreed that this ceremony should be performed whenever there was a similar calamity in the Island.[4]

We do not know how many kings followed his example. But we are told that Sena II (851—885 A. C.) had a similar ceremony performed when the Island was visited by an epidemic. In place of the Buddha image, he had the image of Ānanda carried round the streets followed by monks reciting the *pirit* and sprinkling the *pirit-pän* (*paritta* water).[5]

The introduction of the Ānanda image here is significant, for it was Ānanda who went round in Vesāli reciting the *Ratana-sutta*, sprinkling water from Buddha's alms-bowl. Sena II seems to

1. Mhv. calls it *Gaṅgārohaṇa-sutta* as well.

2. When Vesāli was afflicted by famine and pestilence, the Buddha visited the city on the invitation of Licchavis, and recited the *Ratana-sutta*. (It is included in the *Khuddakapāṭha* as well as in the *Sutta-nipāta*). The Buddha first taught this sutta to Ānanda and requested him to go round the city accompanied by Licchavi princes, reciting the sutta and sprinkling water from the Buddha's alms-bowl. The city was saved from the calamity. A great festival was held in honour of the Buddha's visit. Two boats on the river were joined together and a pavilion was built thereon. After this successful mission to Vesāli, the Buddha returned to Rājagaha along the Ganges. This journey is called Gaṅgārohaṇa, and the name was given to the festival itself. (SnA. pp. 204-205 ; CBhA. p. 97 ff.).

3. Geiger says this is a fine example of popular rain magic adopted by the official religion. (Clv. tr. I, p. 19, n. 5).

4. Mhv. xxxvii 189-198. Cf. also a festival called Patta-maha said to have been held in India. In this festival too the stone alms-bowl of the Buddha was honoured. (Rsv. I (BE. 2457), p. 34).

5. Mhv. li 80-81.

have followed this example rather than imitating Upatissa's ceremony in all its details. Sena II is also said to have had the *Ratana-sutta* written on gold plates.[1]

Kassapa V (913–923 A.C.) is also reported to have warded off the dangers of famine and pestilence by engaging the monks of the three fraternities to recite the *pirit* in the city.[2] We do not know whether he followed the traditional customs of the earlier festivals as described above. However in this instance, there is no mention of the image of the Buddha or of Ānanda or of the alms-bowl. The ceremony had probably undergone changes in the course of time.[3] Aggabodhi IV (658–674 A.C.) also held *pirit* ceremonies, but neither the reason nor the details are given.[4]

PIRIT

Pirit (Pāli *Paritta*) which means "protection", was a ceremony held for various purposes like exorcizing evil spirits and dispelling disease as well as blessing an auspicious occasion like occupying a new house. The Book of Parittas (*Pirit-pota*) known as the *Catubhāṇavāra* is a compilation containing suttas from the original *Nikāyas*. According to the *Milinda-pañha* the most important *parittas* are *Ratana-sutta*, *Khandha-paritta*, *Mora-paritta* *Dhajagga-paritta*, *Āṭānāṭiya-paritta* and *Aṅgulimāla-paritta*.[5] The *Dīgha Commentary* gives *Metta-sutta*, *Dhajagga-sutta* and *Ratana-sutta* as important suttas.[6]

1. Mhv. li. 79.
2. *Ibid.* lii 80.
3. About the middle of the 19th century a Gaṅgārohaṇa festival was held at Mātara in South Ceylon. A Sinhalese poem, the *Gaṅgārohaṇa-varṇanā* by Thomas Muhandirama describes this festival in great detail.
4. Mhv. xlvi 5.
5. Miln. p. 119.
6. DA. p. 707. The present book of *Parittas* (*Piritpota*) or *Catubhāṇavara*, in addition to the suttas mentioned above, contains among others *Dasadhamma-s.*, *Maṅgala-s.*, *Mettānisaṃsa-s.*, *Canda-paritta*, *Suriya-paritta*, *Mahā-Kassapa-thera-bojjhanga*, *Mahā-Moggallāna-thera-boj.*, *Mahā-Cunda thera-boj.*, *Girimānanda-s.*, *Isigili-s.*, *Dhammacakkappavattana-s.*, *Mahāsamaya-s.*, *Ālavaka-s.*, *Kasībhāradvāja-s.*, *Parābhava-s.*, *Vasala-s.*, *Saccavibhaṅga-s.*

The *Āṭānāṭiya-sutta* is the most important and powerful in the matter of exorcism. The *Dīgha-Commentary*[1] gives a detailed description of how and when to recite it. It should not be the first to be recited. If the expulsion of an evil spirit is desired, in the first instance the *Metta-sutta*, *Dhajagga-sutta* and *Ratana sutta* should be recited for seven days. If the spirit leaves the patient it is well and good. If he does not, then the *Āṭānāṭiya* should be recited. There are several precautions and observances to be followed in this case. The bhikkhu who recites this sutta should eat neither meat nor preparations of flour ; he should not live in a cemetery, lest the spirits should get an occasion to harass him ; from the monastery to the sick man's house he should be conducted by men carrying weapons and shields to protect him. the recitation should not be in the open air. The bhikkhu should sit in a room with doors and windows closed, and recite the sutta with thoughts of love foremost in his heart ; during the recital he should be guarded by men bearing arms.

The *paritta* should be recited after making the patient take the precepts (*sīlāni*). If the spirit does not leave him, the patient should be taken to the monastery, and laid on the courtyard of the cetiya. After sweeping the courtyard, offerings of flowers and lamps should be made. Then again the verses of blessing (*mangala-gātha*) should be recited. A full assembly of deities should be called. If there is an ancient tree (*jeṭṭhaka-rukkha*) in the vicinity of the vihāra, a message in the name of the Sangha should be sent to the deity residing there requesting him to be present. The man possessed should be questioned as to his name. When the name is mentioned, the spirit should be addressed only by that name. He should be told that the merits of alms-giving and offering flowers and lamps had been transferred to him, and the verses of blessing had been recited as a gift to him, and that now he should leave the patient out of respect for the Sangha. If he still refuses to leave, the *devatās* should be invoked and informed of his obstinacy, and the *Āṭānāṭiya* recited, after declaring that "this spirit (*amanusso*) does not do our word, and we shall obey the Order of the Buddha."

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1. DA. p. 707.

If a bhikkhu is possessed by a spirit, the altars should be cleaned and flowers offered, the merits of offerings should be transferred, and after invoking a great assembly of devatās, the *paritta* should be recited.[1]

THE TOOTH RELIC FESTIVAL

The left eye-tooth of the Buddha (*vāmadāṭhā-dhātu*)[2] which was brought to Ceylon in the ninth year of Mahāsena's son Siri-Meghavaṇṇa (371 A.C.)[3] was the most important and precious of all Buddhist relics ever brought to Ceylon.[4]

In times of internal troubles claimants to the throne tried to take possession of this relic, because it was usually the person who had the Tooth Relic in his possession that commanded public support. We learn from the *Dāṭhāvaṃsa* that there was fighting for the possession of the Tooth Relic among the ruling princes in India before it was brought to Ceylon.[5]

As we have seen earlier,[6] the Tooth Relic was, from the very beginning, associated with the Abhayagiri. Therefore, its exposition and its annual festival were held in the abhayagiri-vihāra.[7] There was a particular building for the Tooth Relic.[8] "By the side of the King's palace is the Vihāra of the Buddha's Tooth, several hundred feet high, brilliant with jewels and ornamented with rare gems. Above the Vihāra is placed an upright pole on which is fixed a great padmarāga (ruby) jewel......"[9]

1. This is an equivalent to exorcism and faith-healing which all popular religions are compelled to offer to the believing masses. The development of the full-fledged *pirit* ceremony as we know today can be seen only after the Polonnaruva period.

2. Dāṭhā. 114, 119.

3. Dāṭhā. 340; Mhv. xxxvii 92.

4. The Dhātu. p. 6, says that there were two tooth-relics of the Buddha in Ceylon.

5. Dāṭhā. 284, 286, 289, 295, 296.

6. See above p. 97.

7. Dāṭhā. 406.

8. Fa Hien, p. 104.

9. Hiuen Tsiang Bk. XI, p. 248.

We are fortunate in getting a vivid description of the Tooth Relic festival from an eye-witness who had seen its celebration early in the 5th century A.C. According to Fa Hien[1] the Tooth of the Buddha was always brought forth in the middle of the third month. Ten days beforehand the king grandly caparisoned a large elephant on which he mounted a man dressed in royal robes, who could speak distinctly, and the man went round beating a large drum, describing the life and the virtues of the Buddha, and announcing to the public: "Behold! ten days after this, Buddha's Tooth will be brought forth, and taken to the Abhayagiri-vihâra. Let all and each, whether monks or laics, who wish to amass merit for themselves, make the road smooth and in good condition, grandly adorn the lanes and by-ways, and provide abundant store of flowers and incense to be used as offerings to it."

When this proclamation was over, the king placed for exhibition on both sides of the road, the five hundred different bodily forms in which the Buddha had appeared in his previous births according to the Jātaka stories. All their figures were brightly coloured and grandly executed "looking as if they were alive".

After this the Tooth of the Buddha was brought forth, and was carried along in the middle of the road. Everywhere on the way offerings were presented to it, and thus it arrived at the hall of the Buddha in the Abhayagiri-vihāra. There the monks and the laity collected in crowds, burned incense, lighted lamps and performed all the prescribed services, day and night, without ceasing till ninety days had been completed, when the Tooth was returned to the vihāra within the city. On *poya* days the doors of the vihāra were opened, and forms of ceremonial reverence were observed according to the rules.

We learn further details from Hiuen Tsiang: "The king, three times a day, washes the Tooth of the Buddha with perfumed water, sometimes with powdered perfumes. Whether washing or burning, the whole ceremony is attended with a service of the most precious jewels."[2]

1. Fa Hien, pp. 105–107.
2. Hiuen Tsiang Bk. XI, p. 248.

The festival of the Tooth Relic, accompanied by the famous Kandy Perahära, is held annually up to the present day in Ceylon.

MAHINDA FESTIVAL

Mahāsena's son Siri-Meghavaṇṇa (during whose reign the Tooth Relic was brought to Ceylon) has the honour of inaugurating a new festival in honour of Mahinda. He had a life-size image of Mahinda made of gold and on the seventh day of the month of Vap (Pubbakattika, October–November) took it to Ambatthala at Mihintalē where the thera had met Devānampiya-Tissa. A great alms-giving was organized in honour of the occasion. From Mihintalē to Anurādhapura the road was beautifully decorated. On the ninth day of the month, in a mammoth procession of monks and laymen led by the king himself, the image was taken to Sotthiyākara, a vihāra built by Siri-Meghavaṇṇa himself, near the eastern gate of the city. For three days the image remained there. Meanwhile the city was beautifully decorated. On the twelfth day of the month the image was taken in procession through the city to the Mahā-vihāra, and it was exhibited for three months in the courtyard of the Mahā-Bodhi. Ultimately, the image was placed in a specially built house in the south-east direction, near the royal palace. The king had also built in that house the images of Iṭṭhiya and other companions of Mahinda. Endowments were made for the maintenance of the place and the performance of the festival. A decree was made that it should be held annually by all succeeding kings.

Dhammakitti, the author of the second part of the *Mahāvaṃsa* (also called *Cūlavaṃsa* I) says that kings from that day honoured this decree, and the festival was held even in his day in the 13th century—nine centuries after its inauguration.[1] Dhātusena (460–478 A.C.) too, is mentioned as one who held the Mahinda festival, at which the recital and exposition of the *Dīpavaṃsa* formed a special feature.[2]

1. Mhv. xxxvii 66-89.

2. *Ibid.* xxxviii 58–59. The Mahinda festival has recently been revived and is now held annually in Ceylon.

THE OFFERING OF A VIHARA

We get from Fa Hien an account of how a monastery was offered to the Sangha by a king in ancient Ceylon. First, the king convoked a great assembly. "After giving the monks a meal of rice, and presenting his offerings (on the occasion), he selected a pair of first-rate oxen, the horns of which were grandly decorated with gold, silver and precious substances. A golden plough had been provided, and the king himself turned up a furrow on the four sides of the ground within which the building was to be. He then endowed the community of the monks with the population, fields and houses, writing the grant on plates of metal (to the effect) that from that time onwards, from generation to generation, no one should venture to annul or alter it."[1]

THE ANOINTING OF IMAGES

We have seen earlier[2] that different Bo-trees were known by different names. In the same manner different Buddha-images had their own personal names like Upasumbha and Abhiseka.[3]

There seems to have been a particular kind of ceremony known as *abhiseka* (anointing) of Buddha-images. Unfortunately we do not have the details of the ceremony. But there is no doubt that it was held to be an important one. The General Migāra was refused permission by Kassapa I to perform the anointing ceremony of Abhiseka-Buddha (-image) which the General expected to hold on a grander scale than even that of the Silā-Sambuddha (-image). Migāra suppressed his displeasure, awaiting the arrival of Moggallāna.[4] When Moggallāna ascended the throne, the General Migāra held the ceremony as he desired, nearly eighteen years after.[5] This long anxiety and enthusiasm of the General indicate that the anointing ceremony of Buddha images was of great interest and importance to the people of ancient Ceylon, whatever it might have been.

1. Fa Hien, pp. 108-109.
2. See above p. 120.
3. Mhv. xxxviii 66.
4. *Ibid.* xxxix 6-7.
5. *Ibid.* xxxix 40.

LAMP OFFERING

Dīpa-pūjā or the offering of lamps was a very popular festival.[1] Thousands of lamps lighted in regular rows on the grounds of a monastery provided devotees with strikingly beautiful effects.

In the same manner there was a ceremony known as *āsana-pūjā* which was evidently performed by covering the altars and possibly even the terraces of the cetiya with flowers.[2]

WORSHIP AT A MONASTERY

When a Buddhist went to a monastery he had to follow certain customs in his worship. He had to worship the dāgäba (cetiya) first, because that contained bodily relics of the Buddha. He had to circumambulate the dāgäba three times keeping the object of worship to his right. If the dāgäba was large he should stop and worship at four places ; if it was small, he should stop and worship at eight places.[3] In ancient days the devotees ascended the *vedikā-bhūmi* (terraces) and offered flowers and worshipped while circumambulating the cetiya, as we have seen earlier.[4] After worshipping the cetiya he should worship the Bodhi.[5] The next object of worship today is the image of the Buddha. But in early literature there is no particular mention of the Buddha-image as an object of worship.[6]

A cetiya should be treated as a living Buddha. All the respect and honour that one pays to the Buddha should be paid to the cetiya as well. If a bhikkhu does not go to worship at the cetiya, it is considered as not attending on the Buddha. A bhikkhu should neither cover both shoulders, nor wear sandals, nor hold an umbrella, nor bathe, nor answer calls of nature within the sight of a cetiya.[7]

1. Dpv. xxi 11, 14—15, xxii 6.

2. MA. p. 888 ; AA. p. 256. The same references mention an offering known as *thalasanthara-pūjā*. Could it be that it was performed by spreading flowers on the courtyard ? *Madhubhaṇḍa-pūjā* is another thing the details of which we do not know . (Dpv. xxi 10).

3. But certain commentaries lay down that a devotee should stop and worship at sixteen places. For details see above p. 118, n. 1.

4. See above p. 118.

5. DA. p. 129 ; MA. p. 207 ; VbhA. p. 245.

6. For a discussion of this subject see above p. 121 ff.

7. DA. p. 757 ; Vbha. p. 360.

VASSA AND KAṬHINA

The *vassa* (Sinh. *vas*) season, roughly from July to October, when monks observed the *vas* retreat remaining in one place, was a period during which the whole country became religiously conscious. As we saw earlier in this chapter, festivals like the *Ariyavaṃsa* were held during this season. Particular arrangements were made for the maintenance of monks during this period.[1] The *kaṭhina* ceremony was the culmination of the whole *vas* season. At the end of the three months a special robe known as *kaṭhina* was offered to the monks of every monastery who observed the "retreat." This offering was considered particularly meritorious. Dalla-Moggallāna (Moggallāna III) is said to have given the *kaṭhina* to all the monasteries in the Island.[2] Even today the *kaṭhina* ceremony is a great occasion in the religious life of the Sinhalese Buddhist.[3]

FUNERAL

Fa Hien[4] has provided us with some valuable information regarding the funeral rites of a monk in the 5th century in Ceylon. This description refers especially to the cremation ceremony of a monk who was recognized as an arahant of the day.

"Four or five li east of the vihāra there was reared a great pile of firewood, which might be more than thirty cubits square, and the same in height. Near the top were laid sandal, aloe and other kinds of fragrant wood.

"On the four sides (of the pile) they made steps by which to ascend it. With clean white-hair cloth, almost like silk, they wrapped (the body) round and round.[5] They made a large carriage frame, in form like our funeral car, but without the dragons and fishes.

1. Dpv. xxi 25 ; E.Z. I, pp. 58. 62.
2. Mhv. Xliv 48.
3. For details of *vassa* and *kaṭhina* see Mhvg. pp. 163 ff., 304 ff.
4. Fa Hien, pp. 107—108.
5. Cf. the Buddha's cremation as described in the *Mahāparinibbāna-s.*, D.II, pp. 87, 100. His body was wrapped in new cloth and cotton many times in turn, and then the body was put into a trough of oil and covered with a lid. In the Anurādhapura cremation no oil was applied to the body.

"At the time of the cremation, the king and the people, in multitudes from all quarters, collected together, and presented offerings of flowers and incense. When this was finished, the car was lifted on the pile, all over which oil of sweet basil was poured, and then a light was applied. While the fire was blazing, every one, with reverent heart, pulled off his upper garment, and threw it, with his feather-fan and umbrella, from a distance into the midst of the flames, to assist the burning. When the cremation was over, they collected and preserved the bones, and proceeded to erect a tope. Fa Hien had not arrived in time (to see the distinguished śramana) alive, and only saw his burial."

These and many other ceremonies and festivals provided the occasion for the people not only to express their religious sentiments, but also to gratify their senses and emotions. They would keep the ordinary masses away from crime, and might be regarded even as necessary in order to maintain a healthy social equilibrium.

17.

EDUCATION

"The history of the Buddhist system of education is practically that of the Buddhist Order or Sangha. Buddhist education and learning centred round monasteries as Vedic culture centred round the sacrifice. The Buddhist world did not offer any educational opportunities apart from or independently of its monasteries. All education, sacred as well as secular, was in the hands of the monks. They had the monopoly of learning and of the leisure to impart it. They were the only custodians and bearers of the Buddhist culture."[1]

This statement of Radha Kumud Mookherji's, made with reference to ancient Buddhist education in India, can be equally well applied to ancient education in Ceylon.

We have seen earlier how the bhikkhus began to take an active interest in educational and cultural activities of the country, and how the whole system of education, both ecclesiastical and lay, was in the hands of the Sangha.

The *Sigāla-sutta* of the *Dīgha-nikāya*[2] says that the education and guidance of the laity is a duty devolving upon the monks. The bhikkhus of Ceylon performed this duty by taking into their hands the education of the whole nation. The rulers and leaders

1. Radha Kumud Mookerji : *Ancient Indian Education*, p. 394.
2. D. III, p. 117.

of the country as well as the commoners were educated and trained by bhikkhus.[1]

In modern usage a learned person is referred to as "well-read", because today knowledge is acquired chiefly through reading. But in ancient days an erudite person was referred to as *bahussuta* "one who has heard much", for knowledge was then acquired chiefly through hearing. It is believed that no books were found in India at the time of the Buddha.[2]

In Ceylon, the Sinhalese Commentaries in book form on the Tripiṭaka seem to have been in use soon after Buddhism was introduced into the Island in the 3rd century B.C., though, in fact, the writing down of the Tripiṭaka itself took place only in the first century B.C.

These books hand-written, most probably on palm leaves,[3] and therefore very rare, were not in extensive use, like the printed books of today. Therefore, in spite of the existence of some books, knowledge was acquired chiefly through the ear, and the old term *bahussuta* could literally be applied to the learned in those days. The pupil had to listen to and commit to memory the instruction imparted orally by the teacher, which the latter himself in his turn had learnt by heart from his own teacher.

Memory played a much more important part in the ancient system of education than today. The frequent repetitions found in texts, which irritate the modern reader, were an aid to ancient students who had to memorize long texts together. Learned masters were reputed for their strong memory : the Majjhima-bhāṇaka Deva Thera, the specialist of the *Majjhima-nikāya*, who

1. It is well-known that kings like Siri Saṅgha-Bodhi (307-309 A.C.), two brothers Jeṭṭha-Tissa and Mahāsena (4th century A.C.), Dhātusena (406-478 A.C.), Aggabodhi VIII (801-812 A.C.) and many other kings in later times were educated by monks. We cannot expect direct references to the education of ordinary people in the ancient chronicles, as it was not the custom to record such things.

2. See Rhys Davids : *Buddhist India*, p. 107 ff.

3. The palm leaf, which in Sinhalese is called *puskoḷa* when it is treated and ready for writing, was in all probability the material on which books were written from very early days. The *tala* tree (*talipot*) from which this leaf is obtained was considered so valuable that it was prohibited, at least in the 10th century, to cut down this tree, for its leaves were essential for the spread of learning and literature. (E.Z.I, p. 87 or 93 line 50 ; p. 185 or 187 line 28).

had neglected his studies for 19 years for intensive meditation, could at the end of this long period, recite by memory and teach the whole of the *Nikāya* without a single mistake or omission. Nāga Thera of Kāraliyagiri, who had given up his studies for 18 years, could teach the *Dhātukathā* without a single mistake. Dhammarakkhita of Tulādhāra-pabbata in Rohaṇa was out of touch with certain texts for 30 years, but could teach the whole of the Tripiṭaka without hesitation.[1]

The *Dīgha Commentary* records that two theras — Mahā-gatimba-Abhaya and Dīgha-bhāṇaka-Abhaya could remember certain incidents in their life which occured when they were five days and nine days old respectively. Tipiṭaka Cūlābhaya Thera could remember the names of all the citizens of Anurādhapura and could recognize them again if they were presented to him only once.[2]

Such feats of memory, which sound incredible to a modern reader, were considered as marks of wisdom and a clear and healthy state of mind. Max Muller says : "We can form no opinion of the power of memory in a state of society so different from ours as the Indian Parishads are from our universities. Feats of memory, such as we hear of now and then, show that our notions of the limits of that faculty are quite arbitrary. Our own memory has been systematically undermined for many generations. To speak of nothing else, one sheet of *The Times* newspaper every morning is quite sufficient to distract and unsettle the healthiest memory."[3] The number of bhikkhus who could recite the whole of a *Nikāya* by heart shows that memorizing in those days was a common thing.[4] There is however no need to assume that "while memory prevails, the solid power of understanding fails."

Although education was in the main carried on through memory and the auditory faculty, it would not be correct to

1. Vsm. pp. 71-72.
2. DA. p. 365.
3. Quoted by Mookerji in his *Ancient Indian Education*, p. 212.
4. It was not too much for a person of good memory who devoted his whole life mainly to that purpose to commit to memory about 500 to 1000 pages. We should not forget that these texts teem with repetitions of long passages.

conclude that no written books were used at all. Books were used of course, but infrequently. It was not possible for every student to possess his text : the production of a manuscript was so laborious. Most probably manuscripts were available for reference at the principal monasteries. Occasionally we get references to the reading of books. A statement in the *Samantapāsādikā* indicates that books were read (*potthakampi vācetuṃ*) even in the night by the light of oil lamps (*dīpāloke*).[1] The *Mahāvaṃsa* records that young Dhātusena in the 5th century was studying a book (*potthaka*) under a tree.[2]

The scarcity of books and the lack of means of communication presented great hardships to students. There is a reference in the *Vibhaṅga Commentary*[3] to a student-monk who travelled a distance of a hundred *yojanas* just to have a point made clear by his teacher. This monk, whose name was Tissa, the son of the householder Punabbasu, after his education in Ceylon, went to India to study further under the celebrated Yonaka Dhammarakkhita Thera. After completing his education there, on his way back to Ceylon, when he was about to embark on a ship, a doubt arose in his mind regarding a certain point. He postponed his trip at once, went back a hundred *yojanas* again to his teacher Dhammarakkhita and had his doubt cleared.[4]

The aim of education was the development of moral and spiritual character. Mere learning devoid of this purpose was considered worthless. If a person studied religion with the idea of gaining material profits, and not with the idea of improving his moral and spiritual character, it was considered better for him to sleep than to waste his time in study.[5]

Teachers were always anxious to inculcate this ideal in the minds of their pupils. The duty of a teacher was not only to teach, but also to look after the moral and spiritual welfare of his pupils. Thus, the principal of Kāladīghavāpidvāra-vihāra

1. Smp. (SHB) p. 501.
2. Mhv. xxxviii 16—18.
3. VbhA. p. 273.
4. This also is a fine example to prove how genuine, sincere and indefatigable those students were in their studies.
5. MA. p. 325.

(referred to above) did not admit a certain pupil into his class until the latter promised not to go about in the village. The teacher feared that the young pupil might fall a victim to some temptation if he was allowed freedom of movement.[1] When the famous Kāla-Buddharakkhita returned to his monastery after completing his education, his *upajjhāya* (preceptor) pointed out to him that education was not all, and that he should meditate and try to attain some spiritual realization. Accordingly, Kāla-Buddharakkhita applied himself to meditation and attained arahantship.[2]

Learning without moral character was held in such contempt that no one liked to learn from a teacher of questionable character. Hence, it was with great difficulty that Mahā-Rakkhita Thera was persuaded to learn the *Mahāniddesa* from a monk who led an impure life. Mahā-Rakkhita unwillingly agreed to learn it, because this immoral monk happened to be the only one in Ceylon who knew *Mahāniddesa*.[3] Had Mahā-Rakkhita not learnt this text, it would have been lost with the death of the bad monk.

As education was in the hands of monks, it was but natural that it should primarily be religious. No one who was not well-versed in religion was considered cultured. A sound knowledge of Buddhism, including the Vinaya and the Abhidhamma, was of primary importance for a cultured person, whether bhikkhu or layman. The high officials of the government were usually well-versed in Buddhism. Thus, we come across a number of ministers who were learned enough to be commissioned to settle both ecclesiastical and doctrinal disputes.[4] Ābhidhammika Godatta Thera's[5] qualification to be raised virtually to the position of Chief Justice of Ceylon was mainly his great knowledge of Buddhist philosophy and the Vinaya.

Proficiency in the Abhidhamma, which exalted a person to the revered position of a philosopher, was a difficult achievement coveted by all. This is probably why Jeṭṭha-Tissa III requested

1. MA. p. 353. See also above p. 187 ff.
2. *Ibid.* p. 469.
3. This was during the Brāhmaṇa-Tissa Famine, Smp. (SHB) p. 503.
4. See below pp. 298-299.
5. Referred to above, see p. 163.

his queen to become a nun and study the Abhidamma.[1] Kings like Kassapa II (641–650 A.C.) and Mahinda II (772–792 A.C.) are reported to have made special efforts to spread a knowledge of the Abhidhamma.[2] The Abhidhamma was considered so sublime and profound that it is said that at the expiration of the Sāsana (*sāsanantaradhāna*), the Abhidhamma Piṭaka will die out before the other two Piṭakas.[3] We have seen earlier how the teachers of the Abhidhamma were honoured more than the teachers of the other two Piṭakas.[4]

A general knowledge of Buddhism was considered essential to create good citizens. So we find many good kings honouring learned monks and providing facilities for both adults and children to learn the dhamma. Special mention should be made of Moggallāna II (537–556 A.C.) who is reported to have lured children to learn the dhamma by giving them sweetmeats.[5]

We have no definite information regarding the curriculum of study in ancient Ceylon, apart from religion. But there is evidence that cultural and vocational subjects, like grammar, prosody, rhetoric, literature, history, logic, arithmetic, medicine and astrology were taught in monasteries. The law of the land which was nothing but custom (*cāritta*) was also possibly a subject. A knowledge of and training in fine arts like painting and sculpture was also available in monasteries. We have seen earlier what great artists there were among the Sinhalese monks.[6] But training in crafts was generally handed down in families from father to son.[7]

Even kings are mentioned as great craftsmen. Jeṭṭha-Tissa II had a unique reputation for ivory carving, and he is reported to have taught this art to many people.[8] Even military arts such as archery and swordsmanship were sometimes handed down

1. Mhv. Xliv 107 ff.
2. *Ibid.* xliv 150 ; xlviii 141-142.
3. MA. p. 881 —*paṭhamaṃ abhidhammapiṭakaṃ nassati.*
4. See above p. 161.
5. Mhv. xli 58-60 ; xliv 47 ; xlv 2 ; xlix 33.
6. See above p. 164.
7. We cannot definitely say that crafts were not taught in monasteries.
8. Mhv. xxxvii 100-101.

from father to son. Phussadeva, one of Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī's ten generals, for example, was trained in archery by his own father. It is said that this art was handed down in their family (*vaṃsāgataṃ*).[1]

While every monastery in the country served the purpose of a free school, there were centres of learning holding the position of universities for higher studies and specialized knowledge. Chief among them was the Mahāvihāra at Anurādhapura. But there were a few other centres, even more reputed than the Mahāvihāra for certain specialized knowledge. Rohaṇa had several such places.

Even highly educated monks from the Mahāvihāra went to these places for specialized studies. Tipiṭaka Cūlābhaya of the Mahāvihāra, for example, was well-versed in the Tripiṭaka, but he had not studied the Commentaries. As his education was not complete without a good knowledge of the Commentaries, he was requested by his teacher to study further under a famous professor, named Dhammarakkhita, well-versed in all the teaching (*sabbapariyattika*), at Tulādhāra-pabbata in Rohaṇa.[2]

The Tissamahāvihāra at Mahāgāma was another celebrated centre of learning in Rohaṇa. Mahāsīva thera of this monastery is reported to have taught "eighteen great groups" (*aṭṭhārasa-mahāgaṇe*) both texts and commentaries (*atthavasena ca pālivasena ca*) day and night without much rest. Even the commentators (*aṭṭhakathā-therā*) came to him to clear their doubts.[3] A young monk from Koraṇḍaka-vihāra (referred to above) is also reported to have gone to Rohaṇa for studies, though we do not know to which place.[4]

Other famous centres of learning were the Kāladīghavāpidvāra-vihāra[5] and the Maṇḍalārāma in Kallagāma. It was at the latter place that the celebrated Maliyadeva Thera and Mahā-Tissabhūti Thera are known to have been educated.[6]

1. Mhv. xxiii 85.
2. Vsm. p. 71.
3. AA. p. 24; DA. pp. 521-522.
4. Vsm. p. 68. Probably he went for general education, not for any specialized study.
5. MA, p. 353. See also above pp. 187, 290.
6. *Ibid.* p. 55; AA. p. 23.

Just as there were centres of learning famous for specialized knowledge, there were also certain groups who specialized in a particular branch of the doctrine. The *Suttantika-gaṇa*, for instance, was a group or a class of monks who specialized in the Sutta Piṭaka, whereas the *Ābhidhammika-gaṇa* specialized in the Abhidhamma.[1] In the same manner, certain teachers and their pupils specialized in the *Nikāyas*, and the *Majjhima Commentary* says that they held fast to those particular collections of the teaching in which they specialized with a personal attachment (*gehasita-pema*).[2] Accordingly we hear of certain theras known as Dīgha-bhāṇakas, Majjhima-bhāṇakas, Aṅguttara-bhāṇakas and Saṃyutta-bhāṇakas,[3] who were regarded as Masters of these *Nikāyas* or Collections.[4] Sometimes there were great monks who were reputed for their proficiency in all the four *Nikāyas*, such as Catunikāyika Tissa Thera of Kolita-vihāra.[5] There were also specialists in the Jātakas like Mahā - Paduma Thera of Tulādhāra.[6]

According to the *Samantapāsādikā*[7] there were three grades of the learned (*bahussuto nāma tividho*). These three seem to have corresponded to the preliminary, intermediate and final grades, and the "syllabuses" were prescribed for each grade.

The monk of the lowest grade, known as *Nissayamuccanaka* (Independent), counting five years after his *upasampadā*, should

1. Vsm. p. 69.

2. MA. p. 250. This habit of specialization can be traced as far back as the first Convocation when particular sections of the teaching were given in charge of selected mahā-theras and their disciples : the *Vinaya* was entrusted to Upāli and his disciples ; the *Dīgha-nikāya* to Ānanda and his disciples ; the *Majjhima-nikāya* to the disciples of Sāriputta ; the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* to Mahā-Kassapa and his disciples ; the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* to Anuruddha and his disciples (DA pp. 10-11). Perhaps the bhāṇakas in Ceylon in the Anurādhapura period traced their connection to these direct disciples of the Buddha.

3. Bhāṇaka means "reciter" . Hence Dīgha-bhāṇaka means "reciter of the *Dīgha-nikāya*." So are the Majjhima and other bhāṇakas. To be a bhāṇaka one had to know at least a good portion of the Collection, if not the whole *Nikāya*. See below p. 295.

4. Smp. (SHB) p. 297 ; AA. p. 363 ; Vsm. p. 211.

5. AA. p. 343.

6. Mhv. xxxv 30. This thera lived during Ilanāga's (93-102 A.C.) time.

7. Smp. (SHB) pp. 577-578.

know by heart (*vācuggata*) at least two *Mātikās*[1]; he should also know four *Bhāṇavāras* from the *Suttantas*[2] for the purpose of preaching on *uposatha* days ; some important suttas like *Andhakavinda*, *Mahā-Rāhulovāda* and *Ambaṭṭha* for the purpose of talking to those who came to see him ; three *anumodanā* for the purpose of giving benedictory talks on special occasions [3]; particulars about certain fundamental Vinaya kammas such as *uposatha and pavārana* ; and also a topic of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) leading up to arahantship. All this he should learn, and then he is qualified to go about freely (*cātuddiso*) and to live independently (*attano issariyena vasituṃ*).

The monk of the second grade, known as *Parisupaṭṭhāpaka* (Attendant of the Assembly), counting ten years after his *upasampadā* should know by heart at least the two Vibhaṅgas of the Vinaya,[4] failing which, he should be able to recite these texts with three others. He should also know the Vinaya-kammas and the *Khandhakavatta*. If he was a Majjhima-bhāṇaka, he should know the *Mūlapaṇṇāska* (the first 50 suttas) of the *Majjhima-nikāya* ; if a Dīgha-bhāṇaka, the *Mahāvagga* (10 suttas of the second vagga) of the *Dīgha-nikāya* ; if a Samyutta-bhāṇaka, the first three sections of the *Mahāvagga* of the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* ; if an Aṅguttara-bhāṇaka, the first or the second half of the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, failing which, he should learn from the beginning to the Third section (*Tika-nipāta*).[5] A Jātaka-bhāṇaka should learn the whole of the *Jātaka* text with its Commentary—not less than that.[6] If a monk was well-versed in these texts,

1. *Bhikkhu-Bhikkhunī-Mātikā*, generally known as the *Pātimokkha*.

2. Evidently the four *Bhāṇavāras* of the *Paritta*.

3. The occasions for the *anumodanā* are *saṅgha-bhatta* (almsgiving), *maṅgala* (an auspicious occasion like occupying a new house or a wedding) and *avamaṅgala* (a funeral or a *mataka-dāna*, almsgiving for the dead).

4. *i.e.* the two Vinaya texts known as *Pārājika* and *Pācittiya*.

5. But according to the *Mahā-Paccariya* Commentary, if a bhāṇaka learns only one Section (*Nipāta*), he should choose the Fourth or the Fifth *Nipāta*.

6. The *Mahā-Paccariya* lays down that in addition he should also learn the *Dhammapada* with the stories. Sometimes the Dhammapada-bhāṇakas are also mentioned as a separate class. DhpA. II (SHB) p. 600.

he was considered well-read or well-educated (*bahussuta*) and was qualified to serve the assemblies. He was a "leader" (*disāpāmokkho*), going wherever he desired (*yenakāmaṅgamo*).

The monk of the highest grade, known as *Bhikkhunovādaka* (Adviser to Bhikkhunīs), should learn the three Piṭakas with their Commentaries, failing which, he should master the Commentary of one of the Four Collections (*Nikāyas*). That would enable him to explain the other *Nikāyas*. Among the seven Abhidhamma texts, he would master the Commentaries of four, because that would enable him to explain the rest. But the whole of the Vinaya Piṭaka should be mastered with its Commentary. If a monk learnt all this, then he would be qualified to be an "Adviser to Bhikkhunīs."[1]

In a monastery, classes were held generally three times a day : in the morning before going out for *piṇḍapāta* for mid-day meal, and again in the afternoon ; the third lesson was held in the evening, most probably after the evening religious routine.[2] Sometimes these classes resembled public lectures. When Tipiṭaka Cūlābhaya Thera of the Mahā-vihāra went with a large number of monks to study under Dhammarakkhita Thera of Tulādhāra-pabbata in Rohaṇa (mentioned above), the time-table was so arranged that the student would recite the texts before the teacher at night, and the teacher would explain them by day. The villagers built a big pavilion (*mahā-maṇḍapa*) before the pariveṇa (residence), and they attended these lectures daily.[3]

Discussion was a principal method of advanced education We have seen earlier[4] that two great Convocations were held annually at the Mahā-vihāra at Anurādhapura and at the Tissamahā-vihāra at Mahāgāma, twice at each place. At these

1. Thus, only a master of the Tripiṭaka was considered competent to function as an adviser to nuns. This was probably, because he should be in a position to answer any questions that were asked. A bhikkhu would have many opportunities to have his doubts cleared, but a bhikkhunī's movements were restricted and her main opportunity to learn was from a Bhikkhunovādaka.

2. AA. pp. 23, 24.

3. Vsm. p. 72.

4. See above p. 172.

Convocations, monks had the opportunity of discussing difficult problems with celebrated specialists and clearing their doubts, thus bringing their knowledge in line with orthodox tradition.

Freedom of discussion was an important feature highly esteemed. A pupil could disagree with his teacher and discuss a point freely without offence, and the teacher did not hesitate to accept the pupil's view, if he was convinced that his pupil was correct. Tipiṭaka Culla-Summa and his pupil Tipiṭaka Culla-Nāga (referred to above), both highly qualified in the Tripiṭaka, held two different views with regard to the term *ekāyana-magga* in the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta*. The teacher gave deep thought to the problem and ultimately found that his pupil's opinion was correct. Culla-Summa is said to have accepted his pupil's view before a public gathering that had assembled to listen to a sermon by his pupil Culla-Nāga.[1] This broadmindedness and freedom of discussion seem however to have been less at the time the Commentaries were written.[2]

To be humble and not to be proud of one's learning was regarded as a sign of great scholarship. The celebrated scholar Dhammarakkhita Thera of Tulādhāra-pabbata in Rohaṇa, after teaching Tipiṭaka Cūlābhaya Thera from the Mahā-vihāra, sat down on a mat (*taṭṭikā*) at the feet of his pupil and begged of him to give him a topic of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*). "Why, Sir," cried the pupil, "haven't I studied under you? What can I say that you don't know?" "But, my friend," said the teacher, "the path of realization is quite a different thing." Tipiṭaka Cūlābhaya was a *sotāpanna* at the time. The teacher is reported to have attained arahantship on the *kammaṭṭhāna* given by his pupil.[3]

Mahā-Nāga Thera of Uccavālika, another celebrated teacher, is also reported to have squatted in the posture of *ukkuṭika*[4] at the feet of his pupil Dhammarakkhita of Talaṅgara to get a topic of meditation.[5]

1. DA. p. 535 ; MA. pp. 186-187.
2. See above p. 200.
3. Vsm. pp. 71—72.
4. See *s.v.* PTS Pāli Dictionary for the description of this posture.
5. Vsm. pp. 476—477.

Sāketa-Tissa Thera, a great exponent of the dhamma, and a teacher of large numbers of monks, is given by the Commentaries as an example of the virtue of not exhibiting one's learning. Once the thera left his monastery and his pupils, and lived as an ordinary monk helping other bhikkhus during a rainy season at a distant monastery called Kaṇikāravālika-samudda-vihāra.[1]

We can almost be certain that all monks had some measure of education. But we have no way of ascertaining the extent of literacy among the laity. However, we can say with safety that among the villagers there were many who were illiterate. A passage in the *Majjhima Commentary* may be taken as indicative of the extent of literacy then obtaining in the rural areas in Ceylon. It says that when an edict is sent out by the king to a remote province, those who cannot read get someone else to read it for them.[2]

That was how the illiterate villagers learnt the contents of a royal inscription set up in a remote province. The words "remote province" (*paccanta-janapade*) are significant. They suggest that in the urban areas no one usually needed the aid of another to understand such a document.

Although learning was chiefly in the hands of the monks, there were among the laity, too, both men and women who were highly learned and cultured. Some of them were so learned that the monks themselves seemed to have agreed to accept them as authority. The *Samantapāsādikā*, for instance, records that King Bhātiya (38—66 A.C.) appointed a minister named Dīgha-kārāyana, a brahmin who was a great scholar versed in various languages (*paṇḍito bhāsantara-kusalo*), to decide on a textual and doctrinal point over which the Mahā-vihāra and the Abhayagiri held conflicting views.[3]

1. AA. p. 44 ; MA. p. 350.

2. MA. p. 157. *Yathā hi raññā paccantajanapade pahitaṃ lekhaṃ tattha manussā lekhaṃ vācetum ajānantā yo vācetuṃ jānāti tena vācāpetvā taṃ atthaṃ sutvā rañño āṇāti ādarena sampādenti.* This passage does not refer to any geographical area of a particular country. This is only a general statement made as an illustration to elucidate a point. But, we know that Commentaries generally drew illustrations from local conditions.

3. Smp. (SHB) P. 418.

The Minister Kapila was commissioned by King Vohārika-Tissa (269—291 A.C.) to hold an inquiry and purge the dhamma of Vaitulya doctrines.[1] During the time of Mahāsena (334—362 A.C.) the Minister of Justice is reported to have caused the expulsion of Tissa Thera from the Order of Monks after an inquiry according to the Vinaya into certain charges against him.[2]

These examples also show that the Ministers of State were often highly learned and cultured men. Their intervention in matters academic and ecclesiastical was due not only to the political power behind them, but also to their intellectual and moral qualifications to deal with such situations.

During the time of Aggabodhi I (568—601 A.C.) there were twelve celebrated poets who wrote poetical works in Sinhalese.[3]

The education of women was not far behind that of men, there is reason to think that learned Buddhist nuns were also engaged in educational work. Naturally they would have devoted their services to the intellectual and moral welfare of the members of their own sex. The queen of Jeṭṭha-Tissa III entered the Order of Nuns and studied the Abhidhamma with its Commentary,[4] a subject meant only for advanced intellects.[5]

A living illustration of the extent and standard of general education in ancient Ceylon is the Mirror-Wall (*kädapat-pavura*) at Sīgiriya. This wall, which was most probably built in the 5th century by Kassapa I (478—496 A.C.) himself, contains on its glass-like surface a large number of small writings, palæographically ranging in date from the 6th century to some time after the

1. Mhv. xxxvi 41.

2. *Ibid.* xxxvii 39.

3. Mhv. xlii 13 ; Nks. p. 15. According to the Nks. The names of the 12 poets are : (1) Sakdāmala, (2) Asakdāmala, (3) Dämī, (4) Bābiri, (5) Daḷabisō, (6) Anurut-Kumaru, (7) Daḷagot-Kumaru, (8) Daḷasala-Kumaru, (9) Kitsiri-Kumaru, (10) Puravaḍu-Kumaru, (11) Sūriyabāhu, (12) Kasupkoṭa-Āpā. All the names seem to be those of lay people. Not a single work of these poets has been found so far.

4. Mhv. xliv 108-117.

5. Among the 12 poets mentioned above there is one called Daḷabiso. Can this be the name of a woman?

Poḷonnaruva period. These *graffiti* are the records left behind by various visitors who came to Sīgiriya during this period, when the rock-fortress had become a place of historical interest.

The vast majority of these records are written in verse, and only a few are in prose. Most of them deal with the beauty of the famous Sīgiriya paintings while others deal with the colossal lion figure at the entrance to the summit of the rock or some other aspect of the majesty of Sīgiriya.

The names and addresses of the authors are very often given with their records. They range from royalties to ordinary village folk. There are kings, princes, ministers, monks, government officials and ordinary men and women. They had come from all parts of the Island. "The vast majority of the names forthcoming in these graffiti are not of the persons who were important enough to obtain a place in history".[1] Even the royal personages have not so far been identified.

The *graffiti* show clearly that the average visitor to Sīgiriya in ancient times had a better education and culture than the average visitor of today. We can see how the historic wall is disfigured with ugly drawings and large initial letters of names rudely carved into the glossy surface of the wall by modern visitors, sometimes even damaging these valuable ancient records. But we do not find a single example of such crudity by ancient visitors. It may not have been proper to write on walls, but the ancient visitors to Sīgiriya seem to have used the Mirror-Wall as a visitors' book with the greatest care.

"Unlike the modern vandals who have scribbled their names in large letters deep into the plaster, the mediaeval visitors recorded their verses in very small letters, generally no larger than those usually met with in ola manuscripts, but often even much smaller, very shallowly incised so that the least possible damage was done to the plaster. The writing, before being incised with a sharp pointed stylus, has been drawn on the wall in red paint and

1. *Sīgiriya Graffiti* by Paranavitana JRAS. (CB), Vol. XXXIV, (No. 92 1939), p. 336.

in a few places it has been left without being incised over. Some of the graffiti are so shallowly incised that it is after very careful observation that they can be noticed."[1]

Writing seems to have been popular in those days. Those who could write appear to have carried with them a stylus as we carry a fountain pen or a pencil. "Each individual has used the hand he was used to, and the idiosyncracies noticeable in the various graffiti are infinite. While some of these graffiti are among the best examples of ancient Sinhalese calligraphy, others are incised in a most careless manner."[2]

These records, which are older than the oldest literary work now extant, were not written by great scholars and celebrated poets, but by ordinary visitors. One stanza is "composed by three apprentices of a master painter, putting their heads together".[3] Several stanzas composed by women show that female education in ancient Ceylon was not far behind that of males.

Paranavitana observes: "One does not usually expect any literary excellence in records of this nature, but I think that some among the stanzas quoted above, without any attempt to select the best, are not devoid of literary merit and deserve to be called poetry"[4] "These spontaneous expressions of their feelings by the representatives of a refined and cultured people, at a place remarkable for its power to touch the aesthetic sensibilities of men, have an appeal not found in much of the formal Sinhalese poetry of later periods which often degenerate into somewhat laboured exercises in grammar, prosody and rhetoric."[5]

The fact that so many hundreds of visitors to Sīgiriya from various strata of society could express their feelings and thoughts in elegant and refined verse proves that education in those days was widespread and not limited to a circle of privileged class.

The fame of Ceylon as a land of learning had spread far and wide. Hiuen Tsiang had "heard that in the middle of the ocean

1. *Ibid.* p. 311.
2. *Ibid.* pp. 311, 312.
3. *Ibid.* p. 334.
4. *Ibid.* p. 339.
5. *Ibid.* p. 340.

there was a country called Sinhala ; it was distinguished for its learned doctors belonging to the Sthavira School, and also for those able to explain the Yoga-śāstra."[1]

Later the Chinese monk had the opportunity of meeting at Kāñchipura in South India about 300 Sinhalese monks headed by "two eminent priests" called Bodhimegheśvara and Abhaya-daṅṣṭra.[2] Hiuen Tsiang, having obtained an interview with them, asked them : "It is reported that the chief priests of your kingdom are able to explain the Tripiṭaka according to the Sthavira School, and also the Yoga-śāstra. I am anxious to go there and study these books. May I ask you why you have come to this place?"

In reply they said that they had come there because there was a famine in Ceylon at the time, and also because Jambudvīpa was the place of the Buddha's birth. Further they said: "Among the members of our school who know the law there are none who excel ourselves as to age and position, if you have any doubts therefore, let us, according to your will, speak together about these things."[3]

1. Beal : *The life of Hiuen Tsiang*, p. 133.

2. These names sound unusual. Evidently Beal has coined these Sanskrit words in translating the names from the Chinese.

3. Beal : *op.cit.*p. 139.

APPENDIX I

WHAT WAS THE MAHĀVIHĀRA ?

What was meant by the term Mahāvihāra? Was it only a place geographically defined or an institution? There is no doubt that, as it was first used, the term Mahāvihāra was most appropriately applied to the first great monastery at Anurādhapura established by Dēvānampiya-Tissa. The monks residing at the Mahāvihāra were naturally called Mahāvihāravāsins, "Residents of the Mahāvihāra". Originally all the bhikkhus in Ceylon, wherever they lived, owed ecclesiastical allegiance to the Mahāvihāra at Anurādhapura ; and thus all monasteries were virtually affiliated to the Great Monastery, more or less as its branches. After the rise of the Abhayagiri in the first century B.C., and of the Jetavana in the fourth century A.C., this unity of the Sangha was disturbed, and other sects appeared on the scene ; and the significance of the term Mahāvihāra was more particularized. In the fifth century A.C., when Buddhaghosa used the term Mahāvihāra in his Pāli Commentaries he seems to have meant the Great Monastery at Anurādhapura as opposed to the Abhayagiri and the Jetavana, and the term Mahāvihāravāsī denoted only those who resided at the Great Monastery at Anurādhapura.[1] But on a secondary development the meaning was extended to embrace all the monks who owed allegiance to the Mahāvihāra wherever they lived.[2]

The term Mahāvihāra was not exclusively used of the Great Monastery at Anurādhapura. There seems to have been several large monsateries known by the same name in other parts of the Island, at least towards the tenth century A.C., when the centre of Buddhism at Anurādhapura was disintegrating. An inscription at Kataragama dated in the Sixth year of Dappula V (923-934 A.C.) uses the Mahāvihāra referring undoubtedly to the Tissamahāvihāra.[3] According to the *Rasavāhinī*[4] a man named

1. This evidently is the meaning given in the *Mahāvaṃsa* too.
2. Even today the bhikkhus of various sects are generally known by the name of dquarters; For instance, those who receive the *upasampadā* at Malvatta, Kandy, are known as Malvatta monks, whether they live in Kandy or Matara. Thus Malvatta, primarily a monastery, refers to a sect in its developed sense.
3. EZ. III pp. 222-223—*Mahaveher* and *Mahaverat*.
4. Rev. II, p. 36.

Ariyagālatissa goes to the Mahāvihāra in Rohaṇa to invite bhikkhus. This decidedly refers to the Tissamahāvihāra.[1] A pillar inscription of about the ninth century at Mannar Kachcheri records certain grants made to a monastery called Bahadurusen Piyangala of the Mahāvihāra.[2] Another pillar inscription of the tenth century at the Gonnāva Dēvālē in the Dēvamädi Kōraḷē of the Kurunāgala District records a grant of land to the "Inner Monastery of the Mahāvihāra".[3]

Whether the term Mahāvihāra in these pillar inscriptions refers to the Mahāvihāra at Anurādhapura, or to some local monasteries belonging to the headquarters at Anurādhapura or to some vihāras locally known as Mahāvihāra, we cannot be certain. It is possible that the celebrated name Mahāvihāra was later on adopted to designate local monasteries.

But in the Pāli commentaries of the fifth century the term Mahāvihāra was never used for any place other than the Great Monastery at Anurādhapura. The Commentary of the *Dīgha-Nikāya*[4] refers, as we saw earlier, to two very important monasteries in Ceylon where bhikkhus used to assemble twice a year regularly. Bhikkhus on one side of the river (Mahaväligaṅga) used to assemble at the Mahāvihāra, and those on the other side of the river used to assemble at the Tissamahāvihāra. Even on this occasion the term Mahāvihāra, without the prefix "Tissa", is not used for the Great Monastery in Rōhaṇa.

1. Sometimes this is called Rājamahāvihāra (Rsv. II, p. 3).
2. EZ. III, p. 103—*Mahavehera Bahadurusen Piyangala.*
3. EZ. IV, pp. 188-189—*Mahavehera Atvehera*ṭ.
4. DA. p. 406. See also above p. 172.

APPENDIX II

CHRONOLOGY

PRINCIPAL EVENTS

in the History of Buddhism in Ceylon from 3rd Century B.C. to 10th Century A.C.

B.C.

3rd Century :

247–207	Reign of Devānampiya-Tissa.
	Introduction of Buddhism.
	Arrival of the Bodhi Tree.
	The Establishment of the Mahāvihāra.
	Birth of Sinhalese Commentaries.

2nd Century :

199	Death of Mahinda.
198	Death of Saṅghamittā.
101– 77	Reign of Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī.
	Birth of religio-nationalism.
	Bhikkhus begin to take interest in social and political affairs.
	First mention of Vesākha-pūjā.
	Building of Lohapāsāda, Mahācetiya (Ruvanvälisāya), Cittala pabbata, Tissamah Vihāra.

1st Century :

43– 29	Brāhmaṇa Tissa Famine (Bämiṇiṭiyā-sāya).
	The writing down of the Tripiṭaka.
	Study (*pariyatti*) assumes greater importance than practice (*paṭipatti*) and realization (*paṭivedha*)—the birth of the doctrine of *Ganthadhura* and *Vipassanādhura*.
	Paṃsukūlikas and Dhammakathikas.
29– 17	Reign of Vaṭṭagāmaṇī.
	First dissensions in the Sangha.
	The Abhayagiri separates from the Mahāvihāra.
	The rise of the Dhammaruci sect.

A.C.

1st Century :

67– 79	Giribhaṇḍa-pūjā originated by Mahādāṭhika Mahānāga.
79– 89	First *māghāta* ("no-killing") Order by Āmaṇḍagāmaṇī.
89– 92	Kaṇirajānu-Tissa kills 60 bhikkhus who plotted against him.

3rd Century

248–249	Ekanāḷika Famine.
269–291	Reign of Vohārika-Tissa.
	Suppression of Vaitulyavāda.
	"Purification" of the Sangha.
	First mention of the Ariyavaṃsa Ceremony.

4th Century

309–322	Reign of Goṭhābhaya.
	Suppression of Vaitulyavāda and exile of the Vaitulya monks.
	Rise of the Sāgaliya sect at Dakkhiṇāgiri.
334–361	Reign of Mahāsena.
	Mahāsena supports Mahāyāna.
	The Mahāvihāra destroyed by Mahāsena.
	Dhammarucikas occupy Cetiya-pabbata (Mihintalē).
	The Jetavana built and offered to the Sāgaliya sect.
	The Mahāvihāra deserted a second time.
	First mention of Bodisatva Image.
362–409	Mahinda Festival originated by Siri-Meghavaṇṇa.
	The Tooth Relic brought to Ceylon during Siri-Meghavaṇṇa's reign.
	Fa Hien comes to Ceylon.
	Mahādhammakathī Thera translated for the first time Pāli Suttas into Sinhalese.

5th Century

409–431	Reign of Mahānāma.
	Buddhaghosa translates Sinhalese Commentaries into Pāli.

6th Century

496–513	Reign of Moggallāna I.
	Kesadhātu, the Hair Relic of the Buddha, brought to Ceylon.
	Title of Asiggāha (probably) inaugurated.
	"Purification" of the Sāsana.
524–537	Reign of Silākāla.
	Jotipāla Mahāthera defeats the Vaitulyakas in public controversy.
	King and Queen of Kaliṅga and their Minister come to Ceylon and join the Order of the Saṅgha.
536–	*Dhammadhātu* brought to Ceylon from Kāsi (Benares).

7th Century

611–617	Reign of Moggallāna III.
	Recital of the Tripiṭaka and "purification" of the Sāsana.

617–626	Reign of Silāmeghavaṇṇa.
	Trouble at the Abhayagiri.
	"Purification" of the Sāsana.
	New interest in the Abhidamma.
626–641	Monasteries plundered.
650–658	Friction between Dāṭhopatissa II and the Mahāvihāra.
658–674	*Paritta* (*Piril*) ceremony mentioned.
676–711	Paṃsukūlikas come into prominence.

8th Century :

766–722	"Purification" of the Sāsana by Aggabodhi VII.
	Hindu Influence on Buddhist practices.

9th Century :

831–851	Reign of Sena I.
	The Vājiriyavāda comes to Ceylon.
	Pāṇḍya Invasion of Ceylon.
851–885	Reign of Sena II.
	Sena II invades the Pāṇḍya country.
	"Purification" of the Sāsana.
871–	Paṃsukūlikas separate from Abhayagiri as a distinctive group

APPENDIX III

LIST OF KINGS*

	Name	Seat of Government	Date	
1.	Vijaya	Tambapaṇṇi-nagara	483–445	B.C.
	Interregnum (Upatissa as Regent)	Upatissa-gāma ...	445–444	
2.	Paṇḍuvāsudeva ...	" ...	444–414	
3.	Abhaya	" ...	414–394	
	Interregnum (Prince Tissa, brother of No. 3 as Regent)	" ...	394–377	
4.	Paṇḍukābhaya	Anurādhapura ...	377–307	
5.	Muṭasiva	" ...	307–247	
6.	Devānampiya-Tissa ...	" ...	247–207	
7.	Uttiya	" ...	207–197	
8.	Mahāsiva	" ...	197–187	
9.	Sūra-Tissa	" ...	187–177	
10. 11.	Sena, Guttika } Tamil usurpers ...	" ...	177–155	
12.	Asela	" ...	155–145	
13.	Eḷāra (Chola)	" ...	145–101	
14.	Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī	" ...	101– 77	
15.	Saddhā-Tissa	" ...	77– 59	
16.	Thullathana	" ...	59–	
17.	Lajji-Tissa	" ...	59– 50	
18.	Khallāṭa-Nāga	" ...	50– 43	
19.	Vaṭṭagāmaṇī-Abhaya ...	" ...	43–	
20.–24.	Pulahattha, Bāhiya, Panayamāra, Piḷayamāra, Dāṭhika } Tamil usurpers while king in exile	" ...	43– 29	

* Based on Geiger's List : Clv. trans. II, p. ix ff.

	Name	Seat of Government	Date
19.	Vaṭṭagāmaṇī-Abhaya (Restored)	Anurādhapura ...	29– 17
25.	Mahācūlika Mahātissa ...	,, ...	17– 3
26.	Cora-Nāga	,, ...	3 B.C.–9 A.C.
27.	Tissa	,, ...	9– 12 A.C.
28.	Anulā	,, ...	12– 16
29.	Kuṭakaṇṇa-Tissa ...	,, ...	16– 38
30.	Bhātiya I (Bhātikābhaya)...	,, ...	38– 66
31.	Mahādāṭhika Mahānāga ...	,, ...	67– 79
32.	Āmaṇḍa-Gāmaṇī-Abhaya	,, ...	79– 89
33.	Kaṇirajānu-Tissa ...	,, ...	89– 92
34.	Cūlābhaya	,, ...	92– 93
35.	Sīvalī	,, ...	93–
36.	Ilanāga	,, ...	93–102
37.	Candamukha-Siva ...	,, ...	103–112
38.	Yasalālaka-Tissa ...	,, ...	112–120
39.	Subha	,, ...	120–126
40.	Vasabha	,, ...	127–171
41.	Vaṅkanāsika-Tissa ...	,, ...	171–174
42.	Gajabāhu I (Gajabāhuka-Gāmaṇī)	,, ...	174–196
43.	Mahallaka-Nāga ...	,, ...	196–202
44.	Bhātiya-Tissa II (Bhātika-Tissa)	,, ...	203–227
45.	Kaṇiṭṭha-Tissa ...	,, ...	227–245
46.	Khujja-Nāga	,, ...	246–248
47.	Kuḍḍa-Nāga	,, ...	248–249
48.	Siri-Nāga I	,, ...	249–268
49.	Vohārika-Tissa	,, ...	269–291
50.	Abhaya-Nāga	,, ...	291–299
51.	Siri-Nāga II	,, ...	300–302
52.	Vijaya-Kumāra ...	,, ...	302–303
53.	Saṅgha-Tissa I ...	,, ...	303–307
54.	Siri-Saṅghabodhi ...	,, ...	307–309
55.	Goṭhābhaya	,, ...	309–322
56.	Jeṭṭha-Tissa I	,, ...	323–333
57.	Mahāsena	,, ...	334–362
58.	Siri-Meghavaṇṇa		
59.	Jeṭṭha-Tissa II		
60.	Buddhadāsa ...	,, ...	362–409
61.	Upatissa I		
62.	Mahānāma	,, ...	409–431
63.	Sotthisena	,, ...	431–
64.	Chattagāhaka	,, ...	431–432
65.	Mittasena	,, ...	432–433

	Name	Seat of Government	Date
66.	Paṇḍu	Tamils Anurādhapura	433–460
67.	Pārinda		
68.	Khudda-Pārinda		
69.	Tiritara		
70.	Dāṭhiya		
71.	Piṭhiya		
72.	Dhātusena ...	... ,,	... 460–478
73.	Kassapa I ...	... Anurādhapura and Sīgiriya	... 478–496
74.	Moggallāna I ...	... Anurādhapura	... 496–513
75.	Kumāradāsa (Kumāra-Dhātusena)	... ,,	... 513–522
76.	Kittisena ...	... ,,	... 522–
77.	Siva I ...	... ,,	... 522–
78.	Upatissa II	... ,,	... 522–524
79.	Silākāla	... ,,	... 524–537
80.	Dāṭhāpabhuti	... ,,	... 537–
81.	Moggallāna II	... ,,	... 537–556
82.	Kitti-Siri-Megha	... ,,	... 556–
83.	Mahānāga	... ,,	... 556–559 (568?)
83*a*.	Lämäni Siṅgānā	... ,,	... 559–568
84.	Aggabodhi I	... ,,	... 569–601
85.	Aggabodhi II	... ,,	... 601–611
86.	Sangha-Tissa II	... ,,	... 611–
87.	Moggallāna III (Dalla-Moggallāna)	... ,,	... 611–617
88.	Silāmeghavaṇṇa	... ,,	... 617–626
89.	Aggabodhi III	,,	... 626–641
90.	Jeṭṭha-Tissa III		
91.	Dāṭhopatissa I (Dāthā-Siva)		
92.	Kassapa II	... ,,	... 641–650
93.	Dappula I	... ,,	... 650–
94.	Dāṭhopatissa II (Hattha-dāṭha I)	... ,,	... 650–658
95.	Aggabodhi IV	... Anurādhapura and Polonnaruva	... 658–674
96.	Datta	... Anurādhapura	... 674–676
97.	Hatthadāṭha II	... ,,	... 676–
98.	Mānavamma	... ,,	... 676–711
99.	Aggabodhi V	... ,,	... 711–717
100.	Kassapa III	... ,,	... 717–724
101.	Mahinda I	... ,,	... 724–727
102.	Aggabodhi VI	... ,,	... 727–766
103.	Aggabodhi VII	... Polonnaruva	... 766–772
104.	Mahinda II	... Anurādhapura	... 772–792

	Name		Seat of Government		Date
105.	Udaya I (Dappula II)	...	Poḷonnaruva (?)	...	792–797
106.	Mahinda III	...	Anurādhapura (?)	...	797–801
107.	Aggabodhi VIII	...	"	...	801–812
108.	Dappula II (III)	...	"	...	812–828
109.	Aggabodhi IX	...	"	...	828–831
110.	Sena I	...	Poḷonnaruva	...	831–851
111.	Sena II	...	"	...	851–885
112.	Udaya II (I)	...	Anurādhapura	...	885–896
113.	Kassapa IV	...	Poḷonnaruva	...	896–913
114.	Kassapa V	...	"	...	913–923

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